SERMONS

Preached on

Several Occasions.

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND

FATHER in GOD,

THOMAS,

Sprat

Lord Bishop

OF

ROCHESTER.

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THE CONTENTS.

Sermon I.

Preached before the King at Whitehall, *December* 24. 1676. *on St.* Mark X. *Ver.* 15. *Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

Sermon II.

Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at St. Margaret's Westminster, *January* 30. 167$\frac{7}{8}$. *on St.* Matth. V. *ver.* 10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness sake: For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* p. 59

Sermon III.

Preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the Sons of Clergy-men, in the

Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, *Nov.* 7. 1678. *on* Gal. VI. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the Houshold of Faith.* p. 85

Sermon IV.

Preached before the King at Whitehall, *December* 22*d.* 1678. *on* Gal. IV. *Part of the* 18*th Ver. It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.* p. 135

Sermon V.

Preached before the Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen, at Guildhall-Chappel, *January* 29. 168½. *on* Prov. xxi. 21. *He that followeth after Righteousness, and Mercy, findeth Life, Righteousness and Honour.* p. 187

A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

AT

WHITE-HALL,

Decemb. the 24th, 1676.

St. Mark X. Ver. 15.

Verily, I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein.

THeſe are the words of our Bleſſed Saviour, on occaſion of his Diſciples forbidding little Children to be brought to him: which it may be ſuppoſed, they did in Zeal for the Reputation

of their Maſter; believing it to be far below the Dignity of ſo great, and wiſe a Teacher, to ſpend time in inſtructing of Children; whilſt his chief Adverſaries the *Phariſees* appear'd in their Synagogues, and moſt publick Aſſemblies, and there, with much Pompous Oſtentation of profound Wiſdom, taught their Men, thoſe that thought themſelves, in that Nation, their Wiſeſt Men.

But Chriſt himſelf underſtood better the Intereſt and Power of his own Religion. He knew, that the deſign of his coming into the World, was, not to continue that Phariſaical, falſly-grave Formality of Life, and Worſhip, which was then in uſe; but to introduce a rational, moral, ſpiritual Doctrine, and a plain, unaffected ſaving way of teaching it. He knew, that his Doctrine ſo taught, was able to convert the moſt ſpecious worldly Wiſdom; or to confound it, if it would not be converted.

And therefore he took a courſe quite contrary to the *Phariſees* practice, and to his own Diſciples expectations. He taught in the meekeſt manner, and refus'd not the meaneſt Scholars. *He reſiſted the proud, but he gave grace to the humble.* The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* he often ſharply contradicted, the

S. James 4. 6.

the multitude he always mildly inſtructed: By his different behaviour to the one, and the other, he gave evident proof, that all falſe pretences, and affectations of knowledge, are more odious to God, and deſerve to be ſo to Men, than any want, or defect of knowledge can be.

In Proſecution of this moſt plain, and familiar way of teaching, whereas his Diſciples here would have rejected little children, he rebuked them, he took the children in his Arms, he Bleſſed them; for the innocence of their Age, he gave it many Teſtimonies of his Extraordinary favour. Ver. 13, 14.

The firſt benefit he did to Mankind in this World, was his becoming a Child: The firſt ſign he ſhewed of his own Divine Wiſdom, was his diſputing with the *Jewiſh* Doctors, in the Age of a Child: The firſt Example he gave of Obedience, and that even to the *Jewiſh Law*, was his being Circumciſed, when a Child. And here alſo, when he would preſcribe a pattern of Evangelical Purity, and Humility, he declares, that little Children, and thoſe Men who moſt reſemble their Nature, are not only capable, but moſt capable of his Heavenly Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God, and Heaven, in the New Teſtament, is either taken for that Eternal Reward prepared for thoſe that believe, and obey the Doctrine of Chriſt, or elſe for that Doctrine it ſelf revealed in the Goſpel: So nearly are the Joys of Heaven and the Laws of Chriſt United; So ſurely, ſhall the poſſeſſion of the one follow the practice of the other; that in the Word of God, they are often both comprehended in the ſame phraſe of the Kingdom of God.

The expreſſion of receiving the Kingdom of God as a Child, is beſt interpreted by our Liturgy, in the Office of Baptiſm; where it is ſaid, that *By theſe words our Bleſſed Saviour exhorts all Men to follow the innocence of little Children.*

Whoſoever therefore ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, that is, whoſoever ſhall not entertain and practiſe the Word of God, with a true child-like ſimplicity and innocence, ſhall not enter therein; that is, ſhall not partake of the Bleſſings of Everlaſting Life.

The whole ſenſe of my Text may be contained in two Propoſitions.

The firſt, That for the right apprehending of the Doctrine of our Saviours Kingdom, the Goſpel, there is required an In-

Ingenuous plainneſs, an unfeigned ſimplicity of mind, and underſtanding.

The ſecond, That, for the ſure inheriting of the Joys of that Kingdom, we are all commanded to practice an undiſſembled integrity of life and manners.

Of theſe, the firſt that I am to recommend to you, is, that ſimplicity of mind, which is neceſſary for the right receiving of Divine Truth.

All wiſe Maſters and Teachers, eſpecially if they profeſs any Art, that is deep, out of the way, and of great uſe, are wont to expect in their Followers, ſome præparatory skill in other lower Arts, before they will proceed to teach them thoſe that are higher. And here you ſee, our Bleſſed Saviour alſo requires his preparations, in thoſe whom he will inlighten with his Heavenly Doctrine. But in a way how much different, how much more condeſcending than that of the Teachers of all Worldly, and Humane Arts! For towards the attaining of moſt profound wiſdom, as is the Knowledge of God; in the moſt uſeful ſtudy, as is the ſalvation of our own Soul: What preparations does he exact? Only the docility, the innocence, the ſimplicity of children.

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But, before we proceed farther, this Chriſtian Simplicity muſt firſt be rightly ſtated, and well underſtood: For it has been often miſtaken on both extremes. Some make it to conſiſt in a blind Faith, as the Enthuſiaſts; ſome in a blind Obedience, as the *Papiſts*. The firſt conclude from hence for their Wild Illuminations, and Groundleſs Inſpirations, and deny all manner of uſe of their Natural Underſtandings, and Judgments in Divine things: The other build on it the neceſſity of an abſolute ſlavery of their Underſtandings, and Conſciences to their Spiritual Governours: Whereas the true Evangelical ſimplicity ſhould keep the Sober, middle way between both theſe: It is ſo temper'd, as neither to extinguiſh the Mans true Natural Light, nor invade the Chriſtians juſt ſpiritual liberty.

Firſt, I ſay, by this child-like ſimplicity of mind, there is not intended any defect of the Natural, or acquir'd Abilities of our Underſtandings, or any neglect of Employing our underſtandings in examining the moſt ſpiritual Doctrines of the Goſpel. As God did never require an entire perfection of Divine Knowledge in any Chriſtian, ſo much leſs did he ever injoyn an imperfection of natural knowledge

ledge in any Saint. 'Tis true, the things of God muſt be ſpiritually diſcern'd: But how ſo? Not that they muſt be diſcern'd by other faculties of the Soul, quite different from thoſe, by which we diſcern natural Truth; but by the ſame faculties, only thoſe rais'd, and more ſpiritually exercis'd.

Does not the Goſpel tell us, that God is *a Reaſonable Service?* It is our moſt reaſonable duty, we being his Creatures: It is moſt conformable to right reaſon; it is the moſt Noble Object of it; it conſiſts in ſound, ſober, intelligible Doctrines, in plain, practicable, rational Precepts. Of all the Creatures, none that we know of, are capable of Gods grace, and mercy, and redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, only Rational Creatures; not the brute Beaſts, that are below our way of underſtanding, nor Angels, that are above it. And therefore certainly that which does, in ſome ſenſe, put mankind only into a poſſibility of being ſaved, cannot be wholly excluded in the great work of ſalvation: Certainly it is not the natural weakneſs of little children, but their native candor; not their want of knowledge, but their docility that is here propoſed to our imitation. Heb. 12. 1.

Nor Secondly, does this receiving the Kingdom of God as a child, ſuppoſe any implicit obedience, or blind reſignation of our underſtandings to all the Commands and Impoſitions of any one preſent Church, or pretended Head of it, as the only infallible Judge of all matters of Faith.

Obedience is indeed a virtue moſt acceptable to God, moſt beneficial to Men: Unity is one of his greateſt Bleſſings: Communion is the moſt beautiful ornament of the Chriſtian Church. And, thanks be to God, there may be as much Union, and Communion amongſt Chriſtians, as is neceſſary for the being, and convenient for the well being of Chriſtianity, without any ſuch tyranny in the Governours of the Church, or ſervitude in its Members: Without inſlaving of private Conſcience, which is Antichriſtian; and only by a moderate governing, and reſtraining of private Conſcience, which is moſt Chriſtian, as well as moſt eſſential to the preſervation of humane ſociety.

The Church has a ſacred and venerable Authority, as long as it teaches ſuch Doctrines, and requires ſuch Duties, as are agreeable to our Saviours. Whilſt it does ſo, much reverence is due to it, much to the

the perſons, more to the Doctrines; to the Perſons for their Doctrines ſake; to the Doctrines for our Saviours ſake. But if the Name and Title of the Holy Church of Chriſt ſhall be ſo abus'd, as to impoſe on our practice ſuperſtitious Precepts, as is the Worſhip of Saints, and ſome others; or on our underſtandings, incredible, impoſſible Doctrines, as is Tranſubſtantiation, and the like; in ſuch caſes, you are free by the Laws of God, and Man: Your ſpiritual obligations do not bind you to believe ſuch Doctrines, and your natural liberty, as well as your Chriſtian, ſets you free from obeying ſuch Precepts.

Our bleſſed Saviour here expects, that we ſhould receive his Laws, as children, but not as Slaves. Thoſe Laws may be ſometimes ſevere, nay, they are imperial, and abſolute, as they come from God; for he is our Lord: But even in reſpect to him, they are paternal too, for he is alſo our Father. They are delivered to us with a Royal Power, and ſweetned by a fatherly tenderneſs; and they ſhould be received by us, with the Duty of Subjects, with the Affection of Children: As Children we ſhould behave our ſelves to him, as Children alſo to his Miniſters, becauſe they are to us in his ſtead: but ſtill as Children, not as

as mean Vaſſals. The True Church of God is the Vice-gerent of God's Spiritual, Paternal Authority, which the Sectaries unjuſtly deny it; but it is not the Vice-gerent of God's Uncontroulable, Omnipotent, Temporal Power, which the Church of *Rome* as unjuſtly uſurps.

This being premiſed, we may now the better go on to examine, wherein the true, ſincere, Chriſtian Simplicity conſiſts, as to that part of it, which concerns the receiving of heavenly Truth.

If we conſider the Original Example which we are here commanded to imitate, it ſeems that this bleſſed Temper is chiefly compos'd of three excellent virtues; of all which there is ſome weak reſemblance in little children.

As the minds of children are generally clear, ſpotleſs, white, untainted, unprejudiced; as they are uſually tender, gentle, pliable, capable of the beſt impreſſions; as children commonly receive their Food, not with nicety, or with intent to quarrel at it, but willingly, and earneſtly, for their increaſe and growth: So, in conformity to that innocent pattern, all the true followers of Chriſt ſhould endeavour to obtain,

Firſt,

Firſt, a plainneſs, and purity of underſtanding; ſuch as is free from artifices, free from prejudices.

Secondly, a ſubmiſſive and guidable ſpirit, a diſpoſition eaſie to all; eſpecially tractable to thoſe, that have either a civil, or ſpiritual Authority over them.

Thirdly, an exact care ſo to learn the Truths of Religion, that they may be employed for their true end, and beſt advantage, which is practice, and growth in the Duties of a Pious, and Devout Life.

Firſt, towards our right inſtruction in the Doctrines of the Goſpel, we ſhould all labour to bring our minds clear, unprejudiced, clean, uncorrupt. For the being void of errors, is the firſt great ſtep to the greateſt knowledge; and that underſtanding, in which tho little is written, yet nothing is blotted; that which is not disfigured by ill impreſſions, is a ſubject moſt capable of the beſt. There nothing is required but plain Teaching; whereas the mind that is either perverted by falſe knowledge, or made crooked by deceitful prejudices, muſt not only be taught, but firſt untaught that ill it had Learn'd: And to unteach is a much more difficult work than to teach.

Such

Such a pure, ſimple, undefil'd diſpoſition of mind, by nature we cannot pretend to; becauſe of the Original Corruption of our nature; but by the Grace of God in the Goſpel we may attain it: And it is the chief deſign of the Goſpel to direct us in the way to it.

That teaches us to cleanſe, and repair by repentance, and amendment, our natural decays, and pollutions; to be conſtantly watchful in keeping our Souls free from carnal, moral, nay, ſpiritual prejudices againſt Religion; to endeavour ſincerely, that our minds be not often overthrown by violent paſſions, nor too much diſordered by Worldly Affections; not ſeduced by ſecular ends, that ſecretly undermine the Soul; not corrupted by bodily luſts, that openly war againſt the Soul; eſpecially that they be not infected by falſe Enthuſiaſtical conceptions, concerning God, and Religion; which are wont moſt dangerouſly to inſinuate themſelves into the Soul, as ſeeming to come from Heaven, and coming under the ſhadow of Religion it ſelf.

The ſecond part of this child-like ſimplicity, is to be teachable, and that in a right method, to be deſirous of Learning Precepts, as well as Truths; of truths to learn

learn the plaineſt, and moſt uſeful, before the deepeſt and moſt ſubtle; of precepts to apply our ſelves to thoſe that concern our ſelves, more than others.

This teachable humility is not only conſiſtent with the greateſt ſpiritual knowledge, but inſeparable from it. 'Tis the property of all true knowledge, eſpecially ſpiritual, to enlarge the Soul by filling it, to enlarge it, without ſwelling it; to make it more capable, and more earneſt to know, the more it knows.

Even in natural things, whoever pretends to have learn'd ſo much, that he has no need, nor will to learn more, he has never learn'd any thing aright. And if this be ſo in natural things, in which the inſtruments, and helps of our knowledge are weak, and the objects of it finite; how much more is it ſo in Divine things? In which the inſtruments, the helps, the objects, the benefits of our knowledge are infinite. In Divine things to be always teachable, to be always learning, is not only the moſt certain way to Divine Wiſdom, but even a good degree of Divine Wiſdom it ſelf.

The third part of ſuch a true ſimplicity of underſtanding is a ſincere deſire, and unwearied endeavour to uſe, and improve our

our divine knowledge in a right manner and to a right end. And what is the great, ſubſtantial ſaving uſe, and end of all ſpiritual knowledge? Is it not to uſe it as children do their Meat? To deſire the
1 Pet. 2. *ſincere milk of the word, as new born babes, that we may grow thereby*? That we may grow thereby. And they who receive their ſpiritual Food in ſuch a manner, what they may want in a delicate appetite, they have in a wholeſom; if they come ſhort of others in the curioſity of their taſt, they as much exceed them in the ſtrength of their digeſtion: Which in a ſpiritual Life, as well as a Natural, is a greater ſign of a healthful conſtitution: Whilſt all other knowledge in Religion only ſerves to make a ſhew, and flaſhes away in diſcourſe, this endures, and is ſolidly beneficial for ſanctification here, for ſalvation hereafter.

Such is that ſimplicity of underſtanding, which is neceſſary for the right reception, increaſing, and improving of our knowledge in the truths of the Goſpel. I am next to conſider that ſimplicity of manners, which ſhould always accompany the ſincere entertainment, and practice of the precepts of the Goſpel.

This,

This indeed has a very near connexion with the former. The head truly enlightned will preſently have a wonderful influence in purifying the heart; and the heart really affected with goodneſs, will much conduce to the directing of the head. The beginning of this bleſſed work is moſt commonly in the head, the perfection in the heart; but neither of them can be perfected without the other.

And what now is meant by the true, unfeigned, Chriſtian ſimplicity of Life, and Manners, and Converſation? We ought to be exceeding cautious, on what kind of Men we fix this Character; for we live in an Age, wherein of all others, Hypocriſie has put on the beſt Counterfeited Vizors, the moſt holy diſguiſes.

Firſt then, as I did before in the ſimplicity of underſtanding, ſo I muſt now do in this ſimplicity of heart: I muſt try to vindicate, and ſeparate it from the miſtakes, and extremes of it. And therefore I affirm, that it does not conſiſt in any ſullen ſeparation, or affected purity, or demure contempt, and omiſſion of the common cuſtoms, and uſages, and faſhions of this World. For moſt certainly, with ſuch common things a Chriſtian may comply, without danger, with true innocence,

cence, and piety; and he may abſtain from them, out of the greateſt ſpiritual pride. Is not a moroſity and ſingularity in ſuch things often made a veil, and cover of licentiouſneſs in greater things? Have we not known it frequently us'd as an opportunity of the greateſt moral diſhoneſty?

Muſt a Chriſtian by the obligations of his holy profeſſion, differ from, and abhor all the cuſtomary forms of civil life? How then could St. *Paul* become all things to all Men? Would he have conform'd univerſally to all ſorts of Men, if all manner of civil, or ſpiritual conformity had utterly been unlawful?

Muſt I with unmannerly freedom, affront Authority, deſpiſe the publick Formalities of Government, live in a different way, put on another face, and garb, than the reſt of my Country men, and alledge the Chriſtian ſimplicity to juſtify this my rudeneſs? What then will become of the Chriſtian liberty, which in other caſes theſe Men ſo much magnifie? If this be Chriſtian ſimplicity, was not the Moſaical ſeverity a much lighter yoke? Did not our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf aboliſh all ſuch Judaical reſervedneſs and ſeparation, at the very firſt founding of the Catho-

Catholick Church? which, it is probable, had never been Catholick ſo ſoon, if he had diſtinguiſhed his Diſciples from all the reſt of Mankind, as the *Jews* were, in every little Circumſtance, or cuſtom of humane Life. For whilſt the True Religion it ſelf was ſtraitned by the Jewiſh, ſevere Spirit; the Church of God was narrow in compaſs, confin'd almoſt to one Countrey, deſpis'd by all the World beſides. It was the honeſt freedom, and univerſal Charity of the Chriſtian Spirit, that firſt rent the Veil, and enlarg'd its bounds, and ſpread its Authority to the utmoſt Ends of the Earth: ſo that next to the Almighty Power of God, one of the Chief Occaſions of the prodigious ſwiftneſs of the Churches firſt Progreſs, was, That the Primitive Chriſtians aſſerted Juſt Liberties of humane Nature, and ſet Men free from the Jewiſh unreaſonable ſowerneſs, and harſh Impoſitions.

'Tis true, we are commanded not *to be conform'd to this World*: But in the very next words, we have the true interpretation of that command. For it follows, *Be ye Transform'd by the renewing of your mind.* It is a new mind, and the transforming of the heart; not new looks, or habits, or geſtures, that Chriſtianity re- Rom. 12. 2.

requires. To the indifferent things of this World we may be, to the decent things of it we ſhould be conformable; only to the Wickedneſs, and Corruptions of it we ſhould not. No Chriſtian is forbidden the honeſt Skill, and Practice, and Prudence of this World; rather ſome are commanded it, all are allow'd it, only none muſt be perverted by it, all muſt uſe it, for higher, and more Spiritual Ends.

So far is the True Religion from obliging all its Profeſſors, either to withdraw wholly out of the World, or in conſcience to avoid all the uſual Obſervances, and Manners, or even the innocent delights of it, whilſt they are in the world; that perhaps none are more capable, as of bringing more benefit to mankind, ſo of doing more Service to God, or exerciſing more Evangelical Graces; than thoſe Men that are of the moſt practical Lives, and engag'd in moſt ſecular buſineſs. Greater will be their Victory over the World, if they ſhall converſe in it, without being defiled by it. If they ſhall labour to perform well all their Natural, Moral, Political, and Religious Duties in it, moſt inſtructive will be the Example of that Piety, moſt diffuſive that Charity, which

which is *ſet on a hill* ſo eminent, and plac'd in ſo good a Light.

Were a Chriſtian to be the Diſciple of *John the Baptiſt*, he might then indeed think himſelf bound to follow the ſolitary, rigid Life of his Maſter in the Wilderneſs: But ſeeing he is to be a Chriſtian, he may be a Citizen of this World, as well as of the *New Jeruſalem:* He ought certainly to imitate a greater Example than of *John the Baptiſt*, that of our bleſſed Saviour himſelf; who, tho he too had his time of retirement in the Wilderneſs, yet liv'd not there; but was frequently in the Temple, convers'd generally in the City, with all ſorts of People, went about every where doing good.

Give Alms, ſays our Saviour, *of ſuch things as you have, and behold all things are clean to you.* Let but a Chriſtian perform the great, ſubſtantial duties of Chriſtianity; and all other ordinary things are clean, and lawful to him. *All things*; of which ſome things were denied to the Jews: *All things*, that are not unclean in their own nature: Thoſe indeed can be lawful to none. The Righteouſneſs, and Holineſs of the Goſpel conſiſts not in doubting much; but in living well: Not in a zeal againſt little things, but for great Luke 11. 41.

Tit. 2. 14. things, in being *Zealous for good Works.* Undoubtedly there may be as much ſuperſtition, in ſome caſes, on a Religious Account, to forbear doing what we lawfully may do; as it is to do what we ſhould not. Superſtition Tranſgreſſes on both extremes, and may offend as much in a too ſcrupulous forbearing, as in overdoing.

The true Chriſtian Purity, and Simplicity of Life, that is here recommended, is therefore ſuch, as is not bound to avoid all manner of compliance with the external faſhions, and comely ceremonies of humane Life, and Converſation. 'Tis enough, if it uſes Ceremonies, as Ceremonies; if it prefers the ſubſtance far before them, if it chiefly regards the inward reality. 'Tis ſuch, as is not at all oppos'd to decence, or civility, or good manners, or good breeding; but to craft, unjuſt artifice, guile, and diſſimulation. 'Tis ſuch, as, according to our Saviours own precept, muſt have *the harmleſneſs of the Dove*, and Mat. 10. 16. yet may have the *wiſdom of the Serpent.* That wiſdom, which ſingle in the Serpent is hurtful, and poiſonous; when it is temper'd with the innocence of the Dove, is moſt commendable, moſt uſeful.

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In a word, 'tis ſuch a ſimplicity, as St. *Paul* the Chriſtian put on, when he ceas'd to be *Saul* the Phariſee: Such as St. *Paul* himſelf deſcribes, when he thus exhorts the Corinthians: *Brethren*, ſays he, *Be not children in underſtanding; in malice be ye children, in underſtanding be ye Men.* You ſee to all true Chriſtians a manly underſtanding, is as much commanded, as a child-like purity: So that in the moſt Evangelical ſimplicity, the prudence, and diſcretion of a wiſe Man may be, ſhould be joyn'd with the native innocence, and inoffenſive meekneſs of a little child. 1 Cor. 14. 20.

You now behold the ſum of thoſe Duties, to which, by the words of our Saviour in my Text, we are all oblig'd. They repreſent to us the neceſſity of a ſimplicity of mind, in receiving the Laws of Chriſt, and of an honeſt plainneſs of heart, in living accordingly: Which indeed are the two principal things, that, in all true Religion, are to be ſtudied, and practis'd by all good Men.

Some proportion, and degree of both theſe Vertues, I ſay, is neceſſary to all Chriſtians. I do not ſay, the higheſt and moſt Compleat Degree of them to any: that is inconſiſtent with the Frailties of our mortal condition, which God himſelf is

pleaſed to conſider, in the gentleneſs of his Precepts. His Laws are perfect, as he is perfect; holy, as he is holy: But, ſeeing we cannot be equally ſo, by reaſon of humane Infirmity, God is pleaſed to accept of Integrity inſtead of Perfection, to prefer Simplicity before Hypocriſy, confeſs'd Ignorance, before Preſumption. What we really, and humbly endeavour, out of his abundant Grace, he will help us to perform, or accept of our Endeavours. As we muſt ſtrive to be Children in Innocence, ſo in his infinite Goodneſs, he looks on us, to be but as Children in Weakneſs.

I am not ignorant, that this Doctrine of Chriſtian Simplicity may ſound ſtrange in the Ears of thoſe Men, who conſult only the low, and mean Intereſts of this Life; and therefore fancy themſelves, in the proud imaginations of their own hearts, to be the only wiſe, and ſubtle Men in this World. With ſuch Men Simplicity generally paſſes in the worſt ſenſe, for Puſillanimity, Weakneſs, Folly, for a Poor-Spirited Chriſtian Grace, that amongſt the ancient Philoſophers, they think, would ſcarce have eſcap'd the being reckon'd for a Vice.

But let none be too haſty in condemning the True Genuine Simplicity: for I muſt

muſt tell them, it has always had an Extraordinary Pre-eminence and Dignity, not only in Religion, though chiefly there; not only in the ſight of God, though that certainly were ſufficient: but in all other things, in the Judgment of all truly wiſe Men, in all the Works of Nature and Art, in all the beſt Practice of Civil Life.

If we obſerve the Order of the whole Creation, and the Ranks of all things viſible, are not the higheſt, and moſt perfect Beings ſtill moſt pure, moſt ſimple, and moſt of one Nature? Thus it is from the Nobleſt Bodies to the Souls of Men, from the Souls of Men to Angels, from Angels to God himſelf: The higher any of theſe riſe in their Excellence, they are ſtill the more ſimple in their Eſſence.

If we examine all the Productions of Mens Hands, or Minds; is not the greateſt Perfection of all Art, a moſt exact imitation of True Nature? There is ſome kind of eaſie, ſolid plainneſs, that far excels all the comelineſs of artificial ornaments. There is ſome kind of Simplicity that is attended with inexpreſſible Majeſty. That, ſays * St. *Chryſoſtom* on thoſe words of St. *Matthew*, like to theſe in my Text, that is the great deſign of all Philoſophy, that is the very

* St. *Chryſ.* on S. *Mat.* 19. 14. ἔστι γὰρ φιλοσοφίας ἔργον, μετὰ σύνεσεως ἁπλοῦν τοῦτο εἶναι καὶ ἀγγελικόν.

very Life of Angels, to have the higheſt underſtanding accompanied with unfeigned ſimplicity.

If we reflect on the moſt Polite Cuſtoms and Manners of Humane Life, nothing is truly graceful, that is over-mixt, or unnaturally forc'd; No Word we ſpeak, no Phraſe we uſe, no Geſture, no Tone of Voice, that is over-artificial, but it preſently offends: nothing in Beauty, in Habit, in Action, in Motion, can pleaſe, that is affectedly labour'd, and over-adorn'd: nothing has ſo much Reverence in Humane Converſation, as True Ingenuity, Manly Plainneſs Gentle Eaſineſs, Undiſſembled Sincerity: nothing ſooner, or more, or longer, affects Men with Delight, and Love, and Admiration: nothing is more Honourable, nothing more amiable, nothing indeed more eaſie and ſafe. It is very probable, that more deep, dark, reſerv'd, crafty men, have at laſt fail'd of their Deſigns, even in this World, than the plain, upright, honeſt Men. The crafty Man has many parts to play, many minds to put on, many Faces to ſhift; So that it is almoſt impoſſible for him ſo to act all, as not to be diſcover'd in ſome, and then he will be ſuſpected in all: Whereas the honeſt Man has but one part

to

to perform, which is his own, and that far more eaſie for him to do; becauſe he always acts according to plain nature.

Thus even in all worldly things, as nothing is perfect without decence; ſo nothing can be decent without ſimplicity. But above all things, this is true in Religion, eſpecially in the Chriſtian Religion. The Goſpel, in the great Duties, and Truths of it, is a plain and ſimple thing; it is ſimple in its end, which is one, and always the ſame, Eternal Life: Simple in the means that conduce to that end, which are but two, and thoſe always the ſame, Faith and Obedience. And ſo ſimple ſhould be the practice of all, that would uſe thoſe means in a right manner, and expect thereby the benefit of that end.

Nothing ſhews a nearer reſemblance to the Divine Nature, than a mind that is pure, unmix'd, and undefil'd: Nothing manifeſts a greater conformity to the Divine Laws, than a Life of plain innocence: Nothing more expreſſes that free, and generous diſdain, which all true Chriſtians have, or ſhould have of theſe Earthly, Tranſitory things: Nothing declares a more magnanimous confidence in the Divine Providence: Nothing a more ſubmiſſive reſignation to the Divine will: No-

Nothing a more ſtedfaſt, and aſſured hope of future Happineſs: Nothing can keep us ſafer from dangerous miſtakes in all matters of Eternal concernment.

The plain, fair, even, candid mind, of which a right meaſure may ſooneſt be taken, is beſt prepar'd to take a right meaſure of ſpiritual things. That mild, and innocent diſpoſition, which leaſt of all deceives others, is leaſt of all capable of being dangerouſly deceived it ſelf, in the ways of Everlaſting Salvation. Have not more bold, venturous, artificial wits fallen into errors, than they, who have been content with the ſteddy, conſtant, firm motion of meek, and humble Chriſtians? Whilſt thoſe preſume all on themſelves, they truſt to the moſt fallible guide: Whilſt theſe wholly ſuſpect themſelves, and implore moſt the Grace of God, they never fail of a certain aſſiſtance, and direction. And what has been generally the ſucceſs of both? The humble, teachable temper of the one has produc'd many real Saints: The Proud, Preſumptuous, ſubtle Spirit of the other has prov'd a fruitful ſoil for the Production of Hereticks, or Atheiſts.

Give me leave therefore moſt humbly to adviſe, and beſeech you all, as you would

be

be eſteem'd the true Diſciples of Chriſt, to labour for this bleſſed temper, which is moſt proper for Diſciples, this humble and ſincere practice of what you do know, this humble willingneſs to be taught what you do not know; and ſubmiſſion to thoſe that do.

I do not by this, in the leaſt, plead for the groſs blindneſs, and implicit Faith of the Laity, which is one of the chief Artifices of the Church of *Rome*. No, we that are Miniſters of the Church of *England*, may be content; nay, we may really wiſh, that all our Laity had as much true, ſolid underſtanding in Religion, as our Clergy. We can get no advantage by your want of knowledge, no more than you can do by ours. We have no ſpiritual cheat with which to delude you; for the repreſenting of which we ſhould ſtand in need either of darkneſs, or of a falſe light. We have nothing in our publick profeſſion, which the wiſeſt Men, the moſt pious Chriſtians may not outwardly practice; Nothing in our Faith, which they ought not inwardly to believe.

We know, and are well aſſur'd, that the only reaſon, why our Church is not more generally embrac'd, and admir'd, is, becauſe the purity of its Doctrine, the ſobriety

briety of its Devotion, the moderation of its Diſcipline, the largeneſs of its Charity, are not more impartially, and calmly examin'd, more generally underſtood. Our Church in its Spiritual State, as you are Chriſtians, is moſt conformable to the Rules of Chriſt, to the Apoſtolical practice, to the Primitive Inſtitutions. In its Rational State, as you are Men, its Doctrines are very agreeable to the reaſon of Mankind; its Precepts moſt becoming the pureſt, and the ſtricteſt Laws of Nature, and Virtue, and Morality. In its Political State, as ye are *Engliſhmen*, its Intereſt is inſeparable from the Intereſt of our Nation, and Government.

We are therefore ſo far from being jealous of your moſt curious, and exact ſearch into the Practices, and Principles of our Church, that we deſire it; nay, we moſt earneſtly beſeech it. We are in no danger from Mens moſt ſubtle inquiry into it; we may be from their utter careleſsneſs, and indifference towards it.

We are not againſt any Mans ſeeing Spiritual Truth; only we would not have the blind preſume to teach others to ſee: We would not have Men think they ſee, when they do not; which is the moſt certain way for them never to ſee at all. We would

would have you know, as much as you can; only we would have you believe that both you, and we, may know much more than we do: We intreat you to ſtrive to know all, in a right way, by ſober degrees, for right purpoſes, and uſes, and ends.

Moſt ſeaſonably is this advice; and I wiſh it could be moſt effectually recommended. For, to ſpeak plain truth, a meek, humble, teachable Spirit, and by conſequence, a devout, peaceable, and obedient Spirit, are almoſt quite gone out of the World: Whereas all things in Religion ſhould be plain, ſcarce any thing will now pleaſe, that is ſo. Whilſt ſo many ſtrive to be Teachers, and place moſt of their Religion in that, How many Cenſurers have we of others? How many Reformers of the publick? How few Learners? How much fewer practiſers themſelves?

Alas! Is it not apparent, that ever ſince ſo many of the Laity have ſo much invaded, ſo many have ſo much deſpiſed the Office of the Clergy; Pride has evidently prevailed over Humility, Faction over Unity, ill Nature over Charity?

Tho I am not willing to make a Satyr on any Religious Party; nor do I think that

that the beſt way to reclaim them: Our Conſciences ſhould convince their Conſciences, our Lives ſhould confute their Lives: Elſe 'tis not enough only to employ our Tongues, and our Fancies againſt their Conſciences: Yet for Truths ſake, this I muſt ſay; that of all the Sects amongſt us, who contemn the Authority of the Church, who ſeparate themſelves from the great things of our Religion, on a diſlike of ſome ſmall things; and amongſt whom all think themſelves gifted Brethren alike: Whatever other virtues, or ſhadows of virtues, they may ſeem to have; whatever Sobriety of Life, or Strictneſs of Converſation, or freedom from ſome Scandalous ſins they may pretend to: For which yet I cannot but ſay, that if they are really ſuch, as they pretend, I wiſh they were ours; yet may they not generally be obſerv'd to be exceedingly defective in the two principal, Fundamental Graces of Chriſtianity? Which are Humility, and Charity. Humility of looks, or habit they may have; but have they as much of heart, or Life? Charity of Good Works do they not too much deſpiſe, as a low, legal way to Heaven? Charity of Opinions, have they any at all?

It

It cannot be denied, but in this laſt Age, in moſt of our memories, our Nation has manifeſtly degenerated from the practice of former times, in many Moral Virtues, and Spiritual Graces, which ſhould teach us *to render to God, the things that are Gods, and to Cæſar, the things that are Cæſars.* Where is that integrity of Manners, that Truth of Converſation, that dutiful obſervance of Order, that Modeſty of Private Life, that Charity towards Men, that humble Devotion towards God, in which, we can only ſay we have heard, our Nation once excell'd?

'Twould be a Melancholy Employment to ſearch into the cauſes of this unhappy change: But whatever other occaſions may have contributed to the continuance and increaſe of it; certainly the chief cauſe of the beginning of it was Spiritual Pride, and Hypocriſie; the want, nay, the contempt of an humble, and docible Spirit.

The different effects of this diſpoſition, and of that, which is contrary to it, have been abundantly tried in all Hiſtories, in all States, Civil, and Eccleſiaſtical; eſpecially Eccleſiaſtical. Thoſe Countries, and Societies of Men have ever moſt flour-

flouriſh'd, where Men have been kept longeſt under a reaſonable Diſcipline, thoſe where the Number of Teachers have been few in compariſon to the Number of Learners. There was never yet any wiſe Nation, or happy Church, at leaſt never any that continued long ſo; where all have thought themſelves equally fit, and have been promiſcuouſly admitted, to be Teachers, or Law-givers.

What can be the conſequence of ſuch a head-ſtrong, ſtiff-necked, over-weening, unmanageable Spirit? Can any thing be more deſtructive to Church, and State, than ſuch a perverſe humour, as is unteachable, ungovernable it ſelf, and yet over-haſty to govern, and teach others? Where Children get too ſoon out of the Government of their Parents, and Maſters: Where Men think it a Duty of Religion, to ſtrive to get out of the Government of their Magiſtrate, and Prince: Where Chriſtians ſhall think themſelves not at all bound to be under the Government of the Church, muſt not all domeſtick, and Politick, and Spiritual Relations ſoon be diſſolv'd? Muſt not all order be ſpeedily overthrown, where all the true ways to make, and keep Men orderly, are confounded?

And

And what, in time would be the iſſue of ſuch a confuſion? What? But either groſs ignorance, or falſe knowledge? Which is as bad or worſe: What? But a contempt of Virtue, and Prudence, under the diſgraceful Titles of Pedantry, and Formality? What? But a Looſeneſs of Tongues, and Lives? And at laſt, Mens taking Pride in, and valuing themſelves on ſuch Looſeneſs? What? but a diſobedience to the Laws of Man, in a pretence of the Kingdom of God; but, in truth, a Neglect of all the Laws both of God, and Man? In ſhort, what? but mad Enthuſiaſm firſt, and then Licentious Atheiſm? For very near is the diſtance, very eaſie the paſſage from one of theſe extremes to the other.

Wherefore for theſe moſt pernicious diſtempers, the great prevention, the beſt remedy is this in my Text, *That we all receive the Kingdom of God as little Children*: That children be carefully inſtructed in Religion, as children, whilſt they are ſo: That our grown Men, our Wiſe Men, eſpecially our Witty Men, ſhould not diſdain to be as children, in reſpect of ſpiritual inſtruction: That the ſame modeſty of opinions, and Duty to Governours, and Submiſſion to Inſtructors,

which children have by nature, without any experience, they would ſtrive to have by choice, as the main end of, and beſt means to improve their greateſt Wit, and Experience.

Lam. 3. 27. *'Tis good for a Man that he beareth the yoke in his youth.* 'Tis good for him that beareth it, not only for humane Society: *Tis good to bear the yoke*; the ſevereſt direction, the hardeſt reſtraint; much more to yield to the tenderneſs of counſel, the eaſineſs of inſtruction, the wholeſom ſeverities of Diſcipline.

Firſt then, in the Name of God, may the means of Education, the times of Inſtitution, the Rules of Diſcipline, the Laws of Government, the diſtance and duties of Inferiors to Superiors, of all degrees, be moſt ſeriouſly regarded: That our Men may be brought up to buſineſs, to profeſſions fitted for the World, for Heaven, by the laborious methods of Virtue, and knowledge, and obedience, by an exact Rule, by ſure degrees: No matter how ſlow, ſo they be but ſure; Better too ſlow than too precipitate.

And laſtly, may our Men of ripe years, our Men of buſineſs, our great Men be intreated to revive, and reſtore the antient ſimplicity, and integrity of manners:

To

To practiſe an inward humility, and lowlineſs of mind; an outward innocence towards all, condeſcenſion to Inferiors, obſervance of Superiors, ſubmiſſion to Teachers, ſubjection to Rulers: And to practiſe all theſe excellent Virtues, not only as ſo many moral, or political Duties, but, as indeed they are, as ſome of the moſt Chriſtian, moſt Spiritual, and moſt Evangelical Graces.

Thus for us all to become as Children, is the ſureſt way to preſerve where it is, to recover where it was loſt, private virtue, publick honeſty, and a National piety.

And by the words of our Saviour in my Text, I am impowred to promiſe to this bleſſed Temper, an Eternal Reward. For if *whoſoever ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall not enter therein*: Hence we may well conclude, that whoſoever ſhall receive it as a child, ſhall enter therein. *For of ſuch*, ſays our Saviour, *is the Kingdom of God.* Of which I beſeech Almighty God to make us all partakers. *Amen.*

FINIS.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

HONOURABLE

House of Commons

At St. *Margarets Westminster*,

January 30th. 167⅞.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,

Printed for *Charles Brome*, at the *Gun* at the *West End* of St. *Pauls*. 1697.

UMI

A

SERMON

Preached before the

Honourable

HOUSE of *COMMONS*,

At St. *Margarets Weſtminſter*,

on *January* 30th 167⅞.

St. Mat. 5. *ver.* 10.

Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake: For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

WE are here aſſembled to lament the Death of one of the beſt Kings that ever lived, and the moſt Pious Martyrs that ever ſuffered. We are this Day to bewail a Crime ſo deteſted by God, and Man, that,

unleſs this Day had been long ſince publickly appointed, by the Voice of the whole Nation, pronounced by you the repreſentatives of it, for us and our Poſterity, to bewail it yearly, in this, and all future Ages; the guilty Memory of this Day had for ever remained an indelible Diſgrace to the Preſent Age, and to the whole *Engliſh* Name it ſelf.

When we ſhall recollect the Afflictions, and the Virtues of that Bleſſed King; and ſhall remember, that in his Virtues he excelled the moſt happy Princes; in his afflictions he equalled the moſt unfortunate Men: Tho it ſhould not incline us to murmur at the Divine Providence, whoſe Judgments are above our knowledge, and therefore ought not to come under our Cenſure: Yet certainly, it cannot but make us abhor the terrible Effects of furious Zeal, when it miſtakes Providence: It cannot but raiſe in us the greateſt Hatred of Faction on a Pretence of Liberty; and of Ambition, when it counterfeits Religion.

Should it not fill us all with Grief and Amazement, that ſuch a King could ſuffer as a Tyrant! Who was, to His People, the moſt conſtant Defender of their ancient

ent Priviledges, the greateſt Author of New ones? Or as an Enemy to the true Religion! Who was in his Life the Great Ornament; in his Death the moſt devout Example of it? Or as unworthy to Govern! Who, not only by his Birth, had a Succeſſive Right to the Crown, which he could not forfeit; but alſo, by his Perſonal Virtues, might have deſerved another Title to it, if his Crown had been Elective, and, as His Murderers impudently pretended, at the diſpoſal of his Subjects.

Whether we conſider Him on the Throne, as he was there, too ſhort a ſpace, the Vice-Gerent of Gods Power; or in the Church, as he always imitated, and reſembled the Divine Purity: Or ſhould we meaſure him, as we would any other Man: Should we take His Picture, as He Himſelf delighted to be drawn, with His Crown and Scepter laid aſide, and His Wife, and Children, or Servants by Him: Whether we obſerve His Royal, and Chriſtian, or His Private and Moral Excellencies; we might find in all, ſome Extraordinary Character of Greatneſs, and of that, which is the only true Greatneſs, ſuch as was admirably temper'd, and adorn'd with Goodneſs.

But

But those other more resplendent parts of his Life, are a Subject fitter for a History than a Sermon. And, no doubt, if there shall be any Virtue, any Praise of Virtue in the Generations to come after us; His Name will live, and be mentioned with Reverence in the Records of Honour: Tho not in the large Roll of those Kings, who have been only Happy, Prosperous, and Victorious in this World: Yet amongst the far smaller number, but much more Sacred, more truely Glorious number of those Kings that have been Saints, and Confessors, or Martyrs; and therefore *more than Conquerours.*

I confess, I might, and, give me leave to say it, I intended to have complained, that the present Age had not made that Use of him, which it ought: His Enemies for their Repentance, and Amendment; nor even His Friends for His Praise and Honour. But blessed be God, I am happily prevented in one part of the Complaint: I have nothing now to wish, but that His Enemies would as well perform their Duty to Him, as, it must be acknowledged, you his Friends have done yours; by that much desired, long expected, Yesterdays Vote; in which you have given a Resurrection to His Memory, by de-

deſigning Magnificent Rites to His Sacred Aſhes. So that now for the future, an *Engliſh* Man abroad will be able to mention the Name of King *CHARLES the Firſt*, without bluſhing: And His Heroick worth will be delivered down to Poſterity, as it always deſerved to be, not only freed from Calumny, or Obſcurity; but, in all things moſt illuſtrious, in all things to be commended; in moſt things to be imitated, in ſome things ſcarce imitable, and only to be admired.

In confidence of this, I will leave the reſt of His juſt Panegyrick to the Regiſters of Civil Hiſtory: And I will only now employ that ſhort time, your favour ſhall allow me, in repreſenting to you that one particular Grace; which, I believe, He had in as high a degree, as our Mortal Condition, of it ſelf, is capable to receive, His Magnanimity in Sufferiug. And it will beſt become this Religious Place, and Office, to recommend to you, from amongſt His many other Virtues, that one Virtue of his Divine Patience, which he could learn from no other Principle, but his Religion.

To this purpoſe, I have choſen to ſpeak on theſe words of our Bleſſed Saviour; wherein he propoſes Perſecution, which,

to

to Nature, seems the greatest Evil, to be the greatest Good: Such as all his Disciples ought, not only to endure well, as a necessary Burthen, but to enjoy as a Blessing.

The Words themselves consist of Three Parts.

First, This New, and Strange, Christian Paradox: That *to be Persecuted is a Blessing.*

Secondly, The only Qualification, that can make it to be so: It must be a Persecution *for Righteousness sake.*

Thirdly, The Great Reason, why it is a *Blessing*: Because it is attended with the greatest Reward, *The Kingdom of Heaven.*

I cannot now stay to insist distinctly on these Particulars, or to handle the Argument in my Text, as a Common place of Divinity. It will neither agree with the present temper of your Minds, or my own, to treat of it in such cold, and general terms. But what I shall say on this great, and Primitive Doctrine of Christianity, shall be only so much, as you may apply to the present occasion: That when I come

come to recount the Kings unparallel'd Sufferings, you His Friends may be ſomething comforted, in beholding the Solid, and Eternal Foundation of His Suffering ſo well; which was no other than the Faith into which we were all Baptized: And that therefore the *Chriſtian Faith*, the Faith of the Church of *England*, may have the credit of that greatneſs of Mind, it taught the King in His Extremity.

That *To be Perſecuted is a Bleſſing*, was a Doctrine never heard of, till our Saviour here firſt introduced it. No other Teacher, or Law-giver, ever went, or durſt go ſo contrary to the intereſts and pleaſures of Fleſh and Blood. None elſe would have laid ſo much weight on Humane Nature: Or could have made it ſo eaſie: None but He, that was God, as well as Man: He that, as Man, knew what it was to ſuffer: And, as God, knew how to ſupport thoſe that ſuffered.

'Tis true, the power of bearing Perſecution well, has been always pretended to, by all Sects, and Nations, and Religions of Men. All Hiſtory is full of ſuch great Examples, amongſt thoſe, to whom the Goſpel was never revealed. But have not the reſt too generally gone, on the wrong, or tottering Principles, of empty Fame, of doubt-

doubtful Philoſophy, of Falſe, or Imperfect Religions? Certainly ſeldom any truely great, ſeldom any ſteddy, and unchangeable Comfort, little laſting relief, moſt certainly ſcarce any Everlaſting was to be found, till the appearance of our Saviour, to make Men, on juſt grounds, to rejoyce, and triumph in Pains, and Loſſes, and Miſeries.

Mankind, before that, was left defective in this moſt Neceſſary Virtue, of which we have all a perpetual uſe. For, my Brethren, there is no Retirement ſo ſecure, no Proviſion ſo large, no Search ſo happy, as to find out that Place, whither no Cares, nor Misfortunes, make their way. The Sweeteſt, the Faireſt, the moſt Plentiful, Alas! you ſee, the moſt Commanding Condition, is oftentimes a greater burden; at beſt, is only a leſs, and a gentler Miſery, not any real Happineſs. Of all thoſe that built Houſes in the Parable, the moſt raiſed them on the Sand: The beſt, and the wiſeſt, could only found them on the Rock: On which, notwithſtanding all their Prudence, the Winds did blow, and the Sea did rage about them: All their Advantage was not a full Quiet; but only that the Storms did beat on them in vain.

And

And this is that for which we are only beholden to our Saviour *Christ*; of whom we may justly say, in respect of Mankind, as *Augustus* said of himself, and *Rome*, *Lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*; he found our Nature weak and frail, composed of *Adams* mouldring Earth; but he made it, and left it of the finest, and most durable Marble. He himself came persecuted; but one of the chief ends of his coming, was to free all that believe on him, and obey his commands; though not from all persecution, yet from all the Curse of it, nay to do better, than if he had taken all persecution quite away, to make it a cause of Joy and Felicity, a Blessing to those that are Persecuted.

And, How feeble! How deceitful! How much like a broken Reed, which only pierces, where it should uphold, are all the other Motives, and Principles of Suffering well, in comparison to those that He has taught!

First, Some Men indeed may strive to endure Afflictions courageously, in a sense of Natural Decence; by force of some Natural Passion, or by the single Precepts of Natural Wisdom. But, What is the chief end, that such Men can propose to themselves? Can it be much more, than the

the bare expectation of tranſitory Fame, and Honour in this World? Or ſome Temporary Intereſt, and Contentment here below? And, what mighty Reliefs or Rewards are theſe? Such Conſolations, at beſt, can only ſtupifie the Mind under pain; they are far from turning the Pain into a Bleſſing. Such Recompences are imaginary, contemptible, periſhing, whilſt the labours Men take for them, are great and real: Whereas to a Chriſtian Sufferer, the labours are contemptible, compared to the ineſtimable greatneſs of the Recompence.

Undoubtedly nothing in this Life can make Afflictions tolerable, much leſs a Bleſſing, but a Belief, that there is another Life; in compariſon to the Joys of which, the Miſeries of this Life are of no conſideration: Nay, a Belief, that we ſhall partake of the Joys of another Life, if we bear patiently the ordinary, and extraordinary Miſeries of this: and that nothing can teach us to do the right way, but Religion; nothing, but the right Religion.

For *Secondly*, There is alſo a ſtrange Force, and Reſolution of Mind, that may proceed from Falſe Religions, and from the Principles of Enthuſiaſm. This kind muſt be confeſt far to exceed all Natural Courage

Courage in its effects; It may sometimes be hardly distinguishable from the true Patience, that is taught by the true Religion it self.

Yet there are very material Distinctions between them: The chief this in my Text. The one is only for the true Righteousness sake: The other for a counterfeit, Hypocritical Righteousness. And besides, they differ, in that the true Religion, rightly used, teaches Men really to believe, that to be persecuted is a Blessing; but never to persecute. False Religion, and Enthusiasm may make Men pretend to believe, that to be persecuted is a Blessing, but really to believe, that the power of persecuting is a greater Blessing, and to use that power with the greatest Cruelty, when they have got it: as we have felt by many dismal Instances, especially that of this black and guilty Day.

However, it is too true, that mistaken Zeal, and deluding Inspirations, have oftentimes a prodigious Influence on those minds, that are possest with them; possest in the worst sense of the word: They can easily make Men dispise all Dangers, and Terrors: They can fill their Proselytes with heat, and raptures enough to rush violently on Torments, to glory in the

falſe preſumption of Matyrdom, to do, as *Empedocles* of old, who caſt himſelf willingly into the fierceſt Flames, that he might be thought to go to Heaven. We have ſeen a blind, Fanatical Zeal enrage forty Men, to make War againſt a mighty Nation in full Peace, in the midſt of its Principal City.

And ſince the Implacable Enemies of our Church and State have had, and ſtill have ſuch a dreadful offenſive Weapon, in their keeping, as all Zealous, though Erroneous Religion is: Should not this, my Brethren, be a ſerious Admonition to us, who profeſs our ſelves Friends to the Church and State, to make proviſion againſt them, by the better, more powerful, indeed, invincible defenſive Weapons of our Spiritual Warfare, that may be learnt from the true and unfeigned Religion? Since they pretend to fetch their Armour from Heaven againſt our Cauſe: Ought not we really to fetch ours from Heaven againſt theirs? We cannot want all other means of defence; we have Reaſon, and Juſtice, and Law, and Loyalty on our ſide: All thoſe the Enemies of our Church and State muſt want: But let us beware, leſt if they have any Zeal, we none, they have ſomething more forcible than any of the other

other. Most certainly nothing but Conscience well-informed can be an equal matcht, for Conscience misguided: Nothing but the power of Godliness; nothing but true Zeal can break the force of false Zeal, and of the very form of Godliness.

Wherefore, from that Fatal Example, how much the Name of Godliness, Hypocritically used, stood our Adversaries in stead; may we be instructed to govern our Minds. and strengthen our Hearts, and reform our Lives, by the Directions and Precepts of the true Holiness; to have our Consciences as much in earnest as theirs, but better informed; not only to hate the Hypocrisie, but to out-do the warmth of their Zeal. And, if the very Shadow of *Christ* could do such wonderful things: What would not his Hand, his Tongue, his Body, his Life do? If by a sad experience, we have found a feigned and dissembled Piety, so outragiously strong, and too long irresistible: Should we not thence conclude, what greater Influence, what more durable Authority, the true Piety might have on our Minds, by the efficacy of its own true Promises, Rewards, and Comforts? In which God has pitied the Infirmities of our weak Humanity: Has supplied them all in a graci-

ous proportion to our defects: Has provided the greateſt happineſs for our immortal, and mortal parts hereafter: Has furniſht us with the beſt relief for our mortal part here.

But, that Religion ſhould beſtow the ſureſt aid, and aſſiſtance in perſecution, is the more ſtrange: Becauſe at the firſt view, it ſeems to make perſecution more grievous, by forbidding us many helps, and means of defence, which Nature offers to the afflicted. Does not our Saviour's Doctrine command us, to have the ſevereſt houghts of our ſelves? It tames the Mind, as well as it requires the Body, to be ſubſervient to the mortification of the Mind: It lays ſo much Reſtraint on our intemperate Pleaſures, that to a carnal man it even ſeems to render proſperity a ſort of perſecution. It denies us the uſe of ſome kinds of Reſiſtance; of all manner of Revenge; of all actual Revenge, which is the delight of the powerful; of all revengeful thoughts, which may be eſteemed ſome eaſe to the weak.

How then can it be that ſuch a Doctrine ſhould turn all perſecution into a bleſſing? Yes moſt certainly: And for the moſt weighty Reaſons; Of which the Two Principal are here mentioned. In this Life

Life it makes the ſuffering delightful, becauſe *it is for Righteouſneſs ſake:* In the next, it makes it our Glory, and Crown, becauſe of its juſt claim to *the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Firſt, I ſay, it is this Doctrine onely that preſcribes ſuch Rules, and provides ſuch Helps for the right ordering of all our Thoughts, Words and Actions in this Life; that if they be exactly followed, will put us into a condition of *ſuffering for nothing but Righteouſneſs ſake.* So much Moderation it impoſes on our Enioyment of things in our power: So much it teaches an inoffenſive meekneſs, and caution of not diſpleaſing God, or injuring Man: That whoever lives accordingly, whatever his Perſecution may be, he cannot but be innocent in it: And if he be innocent, the Perſecution will be ſo too; and will do him no manner of hurt.

To a heart ſo conſcientiouſly prepared; ſo certain of its Duty, ſo rightly ſecured in its Cauſe, the Afflictions of this World have quite another appearance, than to the reſt of the World. They are preſently found to be only the tender Trials of a merciful Father; to be not only his Trials, but Tokens, and Teſtimonies of his Love, and of our Adoption; to entitle us to the

Priviledges of God's own People, and Children, to his peculiar Care, to his ſpiritual Joys, to his Kingdom.

That is the other Contemplation which compleats the Bleſſing. And it is only the hope of that Kingdom, which our Lord *Chriſt alone has purchaſed for us*, that can be equal to the Wants and Wiſhes of our Immortal Souls. That only can refreſh the diſtreſſed, and eaſe the heavy laden, and ſupport the living, and rejoyce the dying; without that expectation, the leaſt Mortal Frailties, and Croſſes, even Mortality it ſelf, were an intollerable Oppreſſion: But, with it, the cruelleſt Mortal Pains may be made light, and inconſiderable: Without that belief, as Chriſtians of all Men, ſo Men of all Creatures, were moſt miſerable. If there were no Proſpect of Heaven, even Earth it ſelf were a kind of Hell: So dark, ſo uncomfortable, ſo diſmally doubtful were the condition of Mankind. But now there is a Heaven, ſo certain, ſo unqueſtionable, ſo near them, who believe it, and labour for it: To ſuch there ſhall not only be no Hell; but even Earth it ſelf, amidſt all their Earthly Calamities, becomes a kind of Heaven: So truely great is their preſent comfort: So unſpeakably great will be their future Felicity. You

You now behold the Character, Supports, and Benefits of that Perſecution; which, which in the Religion, that all of us have embraced, is reckoned as a Bleſſing. This infallibly is the Chriſtian Doctrine. I come next to inforce, and illuſtrate it by a Chriſtian Example. And, I might alledge that of the bleſſed Author of it, our Saviour himſelf: But, in him, it may be ſaid, the Godhead did ſuſtain the Humanity. I might urge the Apoſtles, and Primitive Diſciples: But they alſo were immediately aſſiſted by a Miraculous Power, enabling them to do, and to ſuffer. I might produce a Noble Army of Martyrs, in all Ages of the Chriſtian Church: But it will now be enough, once for all, only to mention the bleſſed Pattern of that Saint-like King: Whoſe wonderful Patience, in an Age, wherein Miracles were ceaſed, did almoſt ſeem to revive them: His magnanimous Suffering did evidence, how much Strength, and Luſtre, the true Piety may add to the moſt Princely mind: The Afflictions, that ſurrounded His Head, did not deface, but beautifie His Life: As the Thorns, His Great Maſter wore at His Paſſion, they were intended by His Enemies for His Shame, and His Pain, but they were in

truth His Crown, His Fourth, more precious Crown.

When I ſeriouſly reflect on all the Sufferings of that Excellent Prince; how little He deſerved the leaſt of them from any Man; how much far otherwiſe He merited from many the chief Authors of them; and yet by how many ſad Circumſtances they were ſtill increaſt; againſt how many fair hopes they ſtill prevailed; and with what unſhaken conſtancy He bore them all: I cannot but conclude, that He was ſeparated, and Conſecrated, as it were, by Gods ſpecial appointment, to fall a glorious Sacrifice; to give a New Example of Chriſtian, Paſſive Courage, to the decaying Virtue of this Age: And that, as the Blood of Martyrs is truely ſaid to be the Seed of the Church, ſo the Blood of one Martyr'd King, ſhould be the perpetual Seed, both of the Church, and Monarchy of *England*.

He ſucceeded to His Temporal Crowns, by the Conjunction, and Indiſputable Right of many Royal Lines. Yet he was ſo far from having the uſual allowance, that ſeems due to Rightful, Sovereign Princes: From obſerving whoſe very faults too curiouſly their Subjects ought; and in better times, their honourable Enemies were

were wont to retire with reſpect: So far He was from being thus uſed, that even His Virtues were miſinterpreted, and ſcandalouſly reviled. His Gentleneſs was miſcalled defect of Wiſdom; his Firmneſs, Obſtinacy; his Regular Devotion, Popery; his Decent Worſhip, Superſtition; his oppoſing of Schiſm, hatred of the Power of Godlineſs. Such was the remarkable aggravation of his unjuſt Perſecutions; that tho he had manifeſtly the Right on his ſide, yet his Enemies, by their Artifices, had got over moſt of the good, and plauſible words, to be on theirs. Whilſt the worſt of their Actions were ſanctified, and made Popular by the ſpecious Titles of *Liberty*, *Purity*, and *Reformation*: He died for the Laws, as a Malefactor; for the Church, the beſt Reformed Church, as an Enemy to the Cauſe of God.

To his People he was ever moſt Indulgent, ſtill ſcattering amongſt them the Royal Prerogatives, with a Liberality rather becoming the Mildneſs of the Giver, than due to the Ingratitude of the Receivers. For, in anſwer to all his moſt Bountiful Conceſſions, he ſtill met with evil Surmiſes, perverſe Comments on all his Acts of Grace: And thoſe ſeconded by Mutinous

Mutinous Petitions, Seditious Clamours, and Aſſaults, and at laſt an open Rebellion. What ſhall we ſay? Some ſtrange fatality, ſome unuſual, unheard of Giddineſs had unawares ſeized on, and, in too great a part, infatuated the *Engliſh* Spirit: To make them grow diſcontented, and ſick of their very Proſperity; thus raſhly to employ the Riches, and Plenty, they reaped from the firſt happy part of his Reign, to render the latter part of it unhappy.

Nor were the Calamities of his Fate only confined to himſelf; which, no doubt, a Mind of ſo much innocent Tenderneſs, deſired; but they were Infectious to all about him. That which, in any other Age, would have been thought a proof of the greateſt humane Abilities, to counſel wiſely, and faithfully ſo Judicious a Prince: And a ſign of the greateſt humane Felicity to be beloved by ſo great and good a Prince: Was then a certain Fore-runner of Misfortune.

Of his deareſt Servants, the Firſt, whom he received from his Father, and himſelf long protected from the blind Malice of Envy, was ſnatch'd from him by the hand of a baſe Aſſaſſinate. And whilſt his generous heart was bleeding for the Loſs,

many

many Thouſands of his Subjects, with ſecret ſhews of Satisfaction, nay, with open Teſtimonies of Joy, applauded the horrid Murther of his Friend.

His other beſt Servant; a Miniſter, the moſt able of that time, both for Counſel and Action; a Friend, one of the beſt which ever the Church of God had, ſince it needed ſuch a Friend: Him he was conſtrained to give up as a Prey to Popular Tumults, or, which is as bad, to Popular Juſtice: Nay, which was worſe, and which ought not to have been mentioned, but that the King himſelf often ſpoke, and writ of it, with ſuch Solemn Remorſe; his Royal and Guiltleſs hand was made an unwilling Inſtrument of that unrighteous Action.

But, the Juſtice this Parliament has done to the Earl of *Strafford*'s Honour, has vindicated the Name of Parliaments, in this Particular: And the Repentance of that merciful King has paid an Honourable Attonement to his Ghoſt. The Servants Innocence has been abundantly juſtified by the Maſters ſo paſſionately accuſing his own Weakneſs, for yielding to his Death. It was indeed a weakneſs, to which the Counſels of his diſguiſed Enemies, or Timerous Friends provoked him.

Yet,

Yet, He could never at laſt have been drawn to it, had he not been half perſwaded, that it was better for one Man to die, than for the whole People to periſh. And how juſtly may we think his Virtues to have been extraordinary! when his greateſt fault, (I make bold to call it his fault, and I believe it was his greateſt) had ſo good and innocent a Foundation, as the Peace of three Kingdoms! Have we not great reaſon to ſuppoſe, that his Conſcience was moſt ſtrictly watch'd and guarded from Sin? Could any of his Enemies, notwithſtanding all their boaſts in this kind, ſhew us a Proof of a Conſcience ſo tender? Which did ſo affectionately lament, ſo ſeverely repent of that Offence, as if the whole Guilt of it had been his own: Whereas, at the worſt, the infirmity of it only was his, the Guilt belongeth to his Enemies.

His own Family was at once Perſecuted in many Quarters of the World. There was ſcarce a great Houſe in all *Chriſtendom*, that had contracted Alliance with him, which God's Viſitation did not ſeem to ſearch out and to reach in that Age. An obſervation, in which, his Adverſaries were wont much to glory: As if He, and His whole Name had been utterly rejected by

by Heaven. But, ſucceſs, and proſperity in this World, is rather a *Turkiſh*, than a *Chriſtian* proof of God's favour; and the adverſity the like of his diſpleaſure. Or elſe we might often ſince have confuted the very ſame Men with their own Argument.

His only Siſter had a long familiarity with unhappineſs. Her, He could never relieve in His moſt proſperous days. Nor was Providence rowzed to reſtore her Family, till about the Year of His Martyrdom.

His own Queen was expoſed to all manner of Injuries: Robb'd of the Priviledges due to her Sex; much more to her high Birth, and Condition: Declared Traytor for doing the duty of a Wife: The Laws of Humane Society violated, to keep his very mind from her: His Letters to her intercepted, publiſhed, condemned, as Correſpondents with the diſaffected.

His Children were driven from his Paternal care, in that Age, which moſt needed it: Some bred up at home under the Diſcipline of his Enemies; of whom even the tender Mercies were cruel: Others wandring abroad, and depending on the uncertain pity of his Neighbours. What

one

one of the Ancients ſaid of *Pompey*'s fall, was too true of the Kings: One Counrry could not contain ſo great a ruine: The Shipwrack was caſt on many Shores: Not indeed to be buried there, as *Pompey* was; but to return again by a wonderful Reſtitution. Yet that ſatisfaction the King himſelf lived not to ſee: He only felt the ſevere ſide, their Separation, and Diſtreſſes: The comfortable part, their Reſtauration his bleſſed Spirit has injoyed in Heaven, ſince his Death: And by a ſtrange, myſterious effect of the Divine Mercy, his very Death ought to be eſteemed the principal cauſe of their Reſtauration.

Thus was he unjuſtly perſecuted in one part of his Domeſtick Relations: There was another alſo; in whoſe Ruine he was even yet more nearly concerned: And that was the *Church of England*. For, Why may I not call our Church a Member of his private Family? Seeing he cheriſheth it ſo familiarly, converſt with it ſo conſtantly, provided for it ſo carefully: It were well if this were all; but I muſt add, he Died for it ſo Zealouſly.

For the Service, and Devotions of this Church, his Affections were ſo inflamed; his Judgment ſo confirmed; his Practice in them ſo Inceſſant; that in all theſe he

was

was ſcarce to be equalled by any of his own Miniſters; I am perſwaded, he was outdone by none. We have undeniable Inſtances, that neither his beſt beloved Recreations; nor one of the moſt ſorrowful Meſſages he ever received; not his moſt urgent Buſineſs; not his greateſt Delights; not his greateſt Grief could prevail with him, ever to omit, or but for a moment to interrupt his daily Solemn Prayers.

From this Church, he might have expected, and he had his laſt comforts. But, alas! when he moſt needed her help, he ſaw her in the greateſt outward Deſolation her ſelf: Her chief Prelate, one of the moſt Innocent, Devout, and Magnificent men of that Age, beheaded in the view of Forty Thouſand Men! and too many of them ſo inhumane, as to rejoice at the Death of a Biſhop; againſt whom, their chief Objection was, his being a Biſhop.

Of this Church, whoſe Preſervation, and Proſperity had been always his chief ſtudy, he lived to ſee the Truth queſtioned, the Glory vaniſhed, the Buildings falling, the Revenues devoured; and ſo devoured, that he himſelf muſt be compelled, either to confirm the Sacriledge by his Authority

ty, or to make way for it by his Blood. Of which two dreadful Extremes he choſe the laſt: And ſo became our Churches Martyr, as he had been her Saint: A Saint incomparably more holy than all the *Enthuſiaſtical* Saints of the Sectaries: A Martyr to be preferred before a whole multitude of Martyrs that ſwell the *Romiſh* Calendar.

Of this Church, in his Impriſonments, the Publick Offices were ſometimes denied him: The attendance of his own Chaplains ſometimes forbid: Seldom but precariouſly allowed: Liberty of Conſcience refuſed the King, by the meaneſt of his Subjects, who claimed it as their own due, both by Religion and Nature, and made that the chief Pretence of their Rebellion againſt him.

His moſt ſecret Duties of Piety were often diſturbed by the abuſe and outrage of the common Soldiers: Hardly the Service of one of his Biſhops was afforded him in his laſt Agony. Yet Providence ſo ordered it, that it was the very Biſhop, whom of all his Clergy, he had moſt employed in Secular Affairs. Nor could any thing more juſtifie the pious, and conſcientious choice of his Miniſters, both of Church and State, than that the very ſame man

man, who had managed his Revenue, ſhould be thought fitteſt to direct his Conſcience; that his beſt Treaſurer ſhould be his laſt Confeſſor.

As to the Unnatural War againſt him, he made himſelf ſo naked to avoid it, that, when it was forced on him, he was not in a capacity to maintain his own Juſt Rights in it: He went ſo far to meet his undutiful Subjects in a Peaceful Compliance: that He diveſted Himſelf of moſt of His own Strengths, by which he might have ſuppreſt them. Why then did His Enemies ſo often tell Heaven in their Prayers, *That it was not the Arm of Fleſh which brought them Salvation*; When they had in their uſurped Poſſeſſion the moſt conſiderable Forces, and Eſtates of their own *Complices*, or *his Friends*, *his Fleets*, *his Magazines*, *his Revenue*, and the far ſtronger part of all *the Carnal Means of the Nation* on their ſide? Why did they ſo often boaſt, in their way of *Vain-glorious Humiliations*, That *they themſelves were only dry Bones, that a Divine Spirit animated them, and that God was their Confederate*? When it was ſo far from being a ſignal Providence, that the King was at laſt overcome; that indeed it was rather a Wonder he was not ſooner: That *You*,

and ſuch as You, and Your Fathers, could ſo long ſupport his declining Cauſe, againſt a power ſo much more mighty than His, and Yours.

But God thought fit to ſuffer Him to be defeated. And, though *the Divine Counſels were in this, as they are in many other things, unſearchable:* Yet, thus much we may ſafely pronounce, *That it was not in Wrath to him, but in Mercy.* It was indeed our Wound, and our Calamity, not his. For his Sufferings that followed his Defeat, redounded far more to his own Glory, than if he *had Triumphed in War*, or if *his Life had ſmoothly ſlid away in peace.* His *Reign*, if it had contiuued quiet, muſt needs have been moſt Happy. That Goodneſs of Temper, had it not been oppoſed, would ſure have been admirable, ſeeing it was ſo great, when moſt bitterly offended. His *Victory*, if he had Conquered, would no doubt have been Mild, and Bloodleſs: None would have periſhed by it, but Arm'd, and in the Field. He had too great a heart, to inſult over the Miſerable. He would certainly have laid no other Chains on the Vanquiſhed, but thoſe of pardon, and Mercy: Seeing he forgave them, and pitied them, amidſt the Pride and Rudeneſs of their own Victory. This

This is a Truth undoubted. Yet ſtill I muſt affirm, that it was more for his own Perſonal Renown, he was overcome. Many others would have ſhar'd with him, in the Honour of the Conqueſt. His Armies, his Commanders, and Fortune it ſelf might have claimed ſome part in thoſe Laurels. But, this was a Praiſe far greater, much rarer, more Chriſtian, wholly Gods, and his own: That, after his Souldiers routed, his Garriſons yielded, his Friends reduced to the laſt Extremity, but deſpair: And, who but ſuch Friends wou'd not then have deſpaired? Yet ſtill he kept his own mind unconquered, and made that Naked, and alone, to incounter, and Triumph over all the malice of his Enemies.

We are now arrived at that, which, in the Worlds Opinion, was the moſt unfortunate: But in a Chriſtian Account, was the moſt Victorious part of the Kings Life. There is ſtill behind a lamentable Story; to us lamentable, though not to Him. But after ſo many *ſad Repreſentations*, it is time the Veil be drawn. The *deplorable remainder* is only fit for *ſuch Savages to hear*, who could *ſee it without Grief*, and *cauſe it without Remorſe* Here therefore let us paſs it by in ſilence: Let

us ſtrive to overwhelm the Cruel, and Guilty Part of the *King's Martyrdom*, which was *His Enemies Part*, by the Contemplation of the Innocent and Honourable part of it, that *was his own*.

And this, my Brethren, is ſuch a way of keeping the *Thirtieth* of *January*, as the *Royal Martyr Himſelf* moſt deſired. This way of obſerving it, is moſt anſwerable to the firſt Deſign; of dedicating ſuch Days to the Memories of departed Saints. For when the Primitive Chriſtians firſt met on ſuch *Solemn Occaſions*, on *the very Days*, and oftentimes *on the very Places* where ſome *Eminent Chriſtian had Suffered*; they were not wont to ſpend their time in *curſing their Enemies*, or *repeating the wretched Circumſtances of their Cruelty*; but rather in praying, *that God would convert them*; in declaring the Pious Works and Admirable Patience of thoſe that had ſuffered; and in giving God the Glory of their Exemplary Sufferings.

You have therefore heard enough, how this bleſſed Martyr was unjuſtly perſecuted: Tho I have ſtopt my Narration on the very brink of the Precipice. Let us now ſee, how he made thoſe Perſecutions a Bleſſing: How he behaved himſelf, in thoſe his laſt, and ſevereſt Conflicts:

When

When the whole World was a Spectator, too calmly a Spectator, of the laſt part of his Life: Whilſt wicked Men furiouſly purſued his Death: Furiouſly; for it was one time, or other, to be the cauſe of their own deſtruction: Whilſt good Men Prayed for him, but could not otherwiſe help him: Nay, his Enemies Prayed too, and boldly belied Heaven, in preſuming, that his Murther was the return of their Prayers. But Heaven was on his ſide; God ſupported him; the Angels Miniſtred to him; The Devils tempted him in vain, his Adverſaries too effectually.

And, I beſeech you, where can there be found a worthier, or more plentiful Subject for our Admiration? Than that ſo great a King, who had ſwayed thoſe Scepters, that are the Ballance of all *Europe*, ſhould come down from his high Eſtate, by ſo many eaſie, and deliberate Degrees! Should put off all the Ornaments of a juſt Soveraignty, to bear all the Indignities of his own Subjects Tyranny, with ſo little Reluctancy, with ſo much Contentment! Should prepare himſelf ſtill for thicker, and greater Afflictions, by a Glorious diſdain, and yet a Pious Improvement of all the former! Should have a mind ſo compaſſionate of others

Misfortunes, even of his Enemies Offences! And yet so Serene amidst his own Dangers! should have a greater Lustre, and Majesty of Countenance, as *Moses* had, and that not when he was performing an Act of Government, and Administring the Law; but when he was dying, by the unjust Pretence of his having broken his own Laws!

For any Man to bear miseries well, has been ever counted so great an Honour, that some of the Ancient Heathens have too Extravagantly thought it equalled Men to God himself, who is not capable of Misery. That (says one of them) is truely Divine to have the Frailties of a Man, the Security of a God. It is indeed, by all true Philosophy, esteemed to proceed from the greatest strength of Nature; by all true Christianity, from the highest Degree of Grace.

Can any other Virtue, so clearly manifest, of what strong, and firm, and invulnerable a temper the heart is made? Passive courage is performed within, in the Soul it self: When Men are forlorn, oppressed, despised, not so well as only forsaken: When they have no Flatterers, few Comforters, scarce any but Enemies near them.

And

And therefore this Grace before was generally more found in the poor, low, and obſcure part of the World: It was commonly excluded from Princes Courts, by a thouſand delights, and by the pompous Dreams of humane Greatneſs. 'Twas almoſt enough Patience before in great Men, to be only more moderate, and reſerved in their Pleaſures.

From the greateſt, and beſt of Kings before, Men uſed rather to take Examples how to lead Armies, to command Nations, to diſtribute Juſtice, to cheriſh their good Subjects, to ſubdue the Rebellious. Theſe were the Arts of Empire. It was from the ſevere Practices of the Cottage, the Cell, and the Gown, that they uſually fetch'd Inſtructions, and Examples, how to ſubmit to hard Fate, to endure mildly the Rigours of a ſtronger Power, to contemn the Melancholly, and Terrors of a Priſon, to pardon, or to bear the affronts of mean Conquerours; and, by ſuch hands to die a violent Death with Decence.

What Praiſes then can be worthy of that King, who ſo much excelled the upper, and the lower part of Mankind in their different perfections? Who out-did the upper in Righteouſneſs and Mercy; the

lower, in Meekneſs, and Long-ſuffering? How ſhall we be able to extol his Goodneſs; who could ſo readily lay down his own Life for his Subjects? When it has been often eſteemed Goodneſs enough in other Sovereigns to ſpare ſometimes the Lives of ſome of their Subjects, that have tranſgreſt their Commands! What Title ſhall we beſtow on that Magnanimous Courage, which could endure all the Barbarous forms of ſuch a Trial, and Execution; the Inſolence of the Ignominious Judges; the horror of the diſguiſed Executioners; nay, even (pardon the Word, for he Pardoned the thing) the Spittle of his Inhumane Perſecutors: Could ſuffer this, with as much unconcerned eaſineſs, as if it had been only the Pomp and Solemnity of his Coronation?

To Witneſs all this, I might challenge the Teſtimony of thoſe very Servants, that were, by his Adverſaries, impoſed on him in his Reſtraints: Of whom, many were converted by his ſufferings, who had been his moſt bitter Enemies, whilſt he flouriſhed. I might alledge his Speeches, his Conferences, his Perſonal Treaties, his Converſation, his Immortal Writings, all compoſed in his greateſt diſtreſſes; ſome near the very ſight of the Scaffold.

Scaffold. They tell us, that when *Cæſar* ſwam for his Life amidſt his Enemies, he had ſuch preſence of mind, as to ſwim with one hand, and in the other to hold up his own Book, and ſave it from Periſhing. But, when the King was incompaſſed with far greater, inevitable dangers, he not only preſerved, but wrote that *Book*; to which, amongſt all the Writings of Princes, I know none equal, but *Cæſar*'s, if his: None Superiour, but *Davids* and *Solomons*.

But, what need we ſeek farther, for a proof of his Royal Courage, and Chriſtian Patience, than to the very Men that conquered him? And that not only now, when they have ſo many Reaſons to condemn their own Cruelty towards him: And, of all Reaſons, two moſt unanſwerable ones: I wiſh they would think ſo: His own pardoning them, and his Sons confirming his Mercy. But we may even venture to appeal to their Opinions, and Cenſures of him, when he was in his loweſt, they in their higheſt, moſt inſulting condition.

His Enemies had him long amongſt them: Long. they had all his neareſt Concernments open to their diſcovery: His

His Chambers, his Cabinets, his very Body, and Heart. The laſt part of his Life they forced him to paſs in a Camp, or Priſon, or Hall, or Scaffold. There were no ſecret conveyances of a Pallace; no officious ſilence of Servants; there all his behaviour was expoſed to the view of all, and chiefly to thoſe that mortally hated him.

And what the leaſt indecence or weakneſs did they diſcern? What the greateſt Reſolution, and Heroick Spirit did they not ſee in him? Did, at any time, any word, or even murmur of diſcontent come from him, for which he ought to have been Jealous of his Enemies preſence? Nay, rather might he not, in all, have wiſhed for their moſt exact, and ſevere obſervation? For what did, or could they obſerve? What in all his Diſcourſes, but great Truth oppreſſed, and yet Glorioufly prevailing? What in all his private Actions, but the moſt unaffected Modeſty, and Devotion? What in all his Publick, but Unmoveable conſtancy, and, the moſt invincible thing in this World, an humble Conſcience well aſſured?

How many various, diſtracting thoughts, of hatred and diſdain, of natural

tural Tenderneſs and Affection (not to ſpeak of Fear, or Deſire of Life) might often then have Aſſaulted a weaker Heart, in any one of all the diſmal degrees of his Paſſion! Was it not then enough to diſcompoſe and ſhake a mind leſs eſtabliſhed: Or then, when, inſtead of the moſt flouriſhing Court of *Europe*, he ſaw himſelf long abandoned to ſilent Walls, or Rocks, and Seas, and yet more cruel Guards? Or then, when in his Solitude he caſt his thoughts back on his Travels aboard; where he was the Love, and Delight of Foreign Courts; and, on his return home, when the whole Nation ſeemed, for Joy, to go out beyond its own ſhores, to meet him: And, now to find, that the ſame Nation lay ſo quiet, and aſtoniſhed at his approaching Murther? Or then, when he reflected on the Spotleſs Innocence of his whole Life, and compared it, as he well might, with other Princes his Contemporaries: And yet obſerved the ſtrange difference that Heaven had made in their Fortunes? Or then when he found, that after the greateſt hopes of Peace, and Accommodation, he was ſo ſuddenly, ſo unexpectedly hurried to deſtruction, that even many of his Enemies could

could not keep pace with the reſt, in their Cruelty? Or when he ſaw, that all the ſecond Attempts of his Loyal Friends had proved as unfortunate as the firſt? Or, when he remembered the Innocence, and the Calamities of the abſent parts of himſelf, and took his laſt leave of thoſe his Children that were preſent? Or, when he beheld the places of his Trial, and Martyrdom; the one the chief Seat of his own Juſtice, the other of his former Splendour?

Or when—I can go no farther. For this can ſcarce be ſpoken without Tears: And Tears will not become a Death ſo Triumphant. Let it ſuffice, that, in all this, he was not without all Natural Affections; nor can any Man, that is, be truely Magnanimous. Two things, indeed, came near his heart: The misfortunes of his Family, and Friends; and the ſlavery in which he ſaw his Subjects were going to be inthralled. Theſe only could touch, yet even theſe could not diſorder his Soul, nor weake. his Faith in God; to whom he meekly reſigned his own Private, and the Publick cauſe, which was his own too; and by a Divine Spirit foretold the happy recovery of both.

Let

Let therefore the preſent Age, and Poſterity, let all his Friends and Admirers know, what his Enemies could not but confeſs; that in all his laſt Words, and Looks, and Actions, he not only equalled his former greatneſs; but he Did, and Spoke, and Look'd, as became the Glory he was going to poſſeſs. He parted from his Crowns, as not aſhamed to have worn them, nor Conſcious of deſerving to loſe them, nor unwilling to leave them. He ſubmitted not to the unjuſt Sentence, as a King: He yielded to the cruel Execution of it, as a Chriſtian. The diſhonourable part he refuſed; the painful he accepted. He pleaded not for himſelf at his Enemies Bar, becauſe it was below him: He pleaded, and prayed for his Enemies at the Bar of Heaven, which only was above him. That Majeſty which Nature gave him, he preſerved, he improved: That Humility, and Charity, which Religion taught him, he practiſed he adorned.

What Comforter, in ſo great Tempeſt, could have inſpired him with ſuch Security, ſuch Calmneſs, ſuch Chearfulneſs? Who? But he, whom the Winds and Seas obeyed: He, that walked himſelf on the rougheſt Waves; ſuffered himſelf

himſelf the greateſt Torments, and was able to make his Diſciples do the ſame. Of that Divine Teacher he Learnt this Heavenly Truth, *That Perſecution is a Bleſſing*: And, he behaved himſelf conformable to that bleſſed Example, as well as Doctrine. He was Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake; whether we take Righteouſneſs for Juſtice, or Religion? For both of which he was a Martyr: And, altho his Perſecutions might ſeem a Curſe to him in this World, becauſe they deprived him of an Earthly Diadem: Yet they were a Real, Inexpreſſible Bleſſing to him: For he is abundantly, unmeaſurably recompenced in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Whether the Kingdom of Heaven be taken, as uſually it is in Scripture Language, for the Goſpel of that Kingdom: Thoſe Truths, and Precepts, that ſhew the way to it: Or for the Joys of Heaven it ſelf, to which they lead: He certainly has had the bleſſings of both: He felt, out of queſtion, the ſincere comforts of the Evangelical Doctrine in this World: His Life ſhewed it; his ſufferings proved it; his Death moſt evidently confirmed it. And therefore we have a charitable, undoubted aſſurance, that he attained, at his

his Death, to the other more happy ſenſe of the Word: That (as he himſelf, the very Moment of his Expiring, ſaid he ſhould) *He has exchanged his Corruptible for an Incorruptible Crown*: That the Text of the Sermon Preached before him, at his Coronation, tho it then might ſeem unſeaſonable, has proved Prophetical: Which was the latter part of thoſe Words, *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

We have now attended this God-like Man, to the end of his Labours: And, as much as we can do, by our Imperfect Applauſes, and Congratulations, we have brought him to the end of his Faith, his entrance into the Kingdom of Glory. But, I am ſenſible, that, in Zeal to perform my poor Office to his Aſhes, I have too much Treſpaſſed on the Patience of this Great Aſſembly. Yet, I was led on by ſome kind of confidence, that, having this the Subject of my Diſcourſe, I ſhould not only have your Cuſtomary Pardon, and more than ordinary Attention, but the moſt favourable Concurrence of your tendereſt Paſſions. For tho, no leſs, and private occaſions, there is ſcarce any Sorrow but may be wearied and dried up, by the diſtance of

of almoſt Thirty Years: Yet I could not but believe, and you your ſelves have given me the greateſt reaſons imaginable to believe it, that there are none here preſent, who came not hither ſtill afreſh, and moſt nearly concerned in the Irreparable Loſs of that excellent King.

Perhaps ſome that have heard me this day, were his own Menial Servants; and ſo were Domeſtick Witneſſes of his Incomparable Goodneſs; and had a ſhare in his particular Kindneſs: Many there may be here, who enjoyed the bleſſed Fruits of his firſt Peaceful, moſt Gentle, moſt Religious Reign: Many I ſee, who grieved at his Ruine, and indeavoured too to ſupport his falling Greatneſs with the hazard of all, with the loſs of much, that was near, and dear to them. Even the youngeſt of us, methinks, cannot but ſtill, moſt ſenſibly regret his untimely Fall; by which they were deprived of ſo perfect an Example of all Virtue, and Piety; and were forced to paſs away their firſt years, that elſe might have been moſt pleaſant, amidſt the Oppreſſions, and Confuſions of their Countrey.

And certainly, all of us together have juſt cauſe to be humbled, under a ſenſe of

of Gods Wrath, and to Implore his Mercy, that this Royal Innocent Blood, which was ſpilt for the Church, and has cried from under the Altar, may at length, ceaſe Crying; not only againſt the Wretched Inſtruments of that Cruelty, for that alſo, in our own Charity, and by his Example, we ought to Pray for: But, that his Blood may ceaſe Crying againſt the whole Nation it ſelf, which (how ſhall I expreſs it, without offence? Nay, how with a juſt Reſentment?) Which certainly ſuffered it by their Negligence: Should I not add, by their Stupidity? And too much haſtened it by their Sins.

And, if we were all cordially thus affected, as, I doubt not but we all are; with ſuch Indignation for his undeſerved Death: ſuch Veneration for his never-dying Memory; may we all endeavour to expreſs theſe our Affections, not only by declaring our abhorrence of thoſe black Counſels, and Accurſed Practices, which finiſhed the laſt part of his Tragedy; but even of thoſe that did, any way, tho at never ſo great a diſtance, in the leaſt, contribute towards it. May all of us, according to our ſeveral Stations and Abilities: And, who can have Abi-

lities to do this, if you here preſent have not? May all of us be moſt induſtriouſly Watchful; that the ſame Schiſmatical Deſigns, and Antimonarchical Principles, which then Inſpired ſo many ill Men, miſ-led ſome Good Men, and coſt our Good King ſo dear; may not once more revive, and inſinuate themſelves again, under the ſame, or newer, and craftier diſguiſes, and find an opportunity to attempt the like miſchiefs.

For the preſent, Let us all joyn in our hearty Prayers to Almighty God, That he would be pleaſed to pardon to us, and to our Countrey, this Hainous, Publick Sin, by the ſame Infinite Compaſſion, by which we can only expect Forgiveneſs of our own particular Sins; By that Blood, which ſpeaks better things than the Blood of the moſt Righteous *Abel*, or *Charles*; By that Blood, which is more Pretious than the *Kings*: By the Blood, and Merits, and Interceſſion of *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Amen.*

FINIS.

A

SERMON

Preached at the

Anniversary MEETING

OF THE

SONS

OF

Clergy-Men:

IN THE

Church of St. *Mary-le-Bow*.

Nov. vii. 1678.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,
Printed for *Charles Brome*, at the *Gun*
at the *West End* of St. *Pauls*. 1697.

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TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND
FATHER in GOD,

JOHN

Lord Biſhop of *Rocheſter*,

PRESIDENT,

And the reſt of the Governours of the Charity, for relief of the Poor Widows, and Children of *Clergy-men.*

MY LORD,

SInce your Lordſhip, and the Governours of this Pious Foundation have, by your commands, laid a neceſſity upon me of Printiug this Sermon: I think I ought rather to be wanting in Prudence to my ſelf, than in reſpect to

you. I cannot but venture the publick cenſure, to ſerve a Deſign; For the promoting of which you all contribute ſo much more, by your Exemplary Zeal, and Beneficence. You, my Lord, eſpecially, whom all acknowledge to deſerve, by your generous Heart, and liberal Hand, the two great Titles you poſſeſs: of diſpoſing his Majeſties Alms; and governing this Royal Corporation of Charity.

My Lord, I am

Your Lordſhips moſt Humble,

and moſt Obedient Servant,

THO. SPRAT.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

SONS

OF

Clergy-Men.

Gal. VI. 10.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the Houshold of Faith.

THese Friendly and Charitable Meetings, Men, Fathers and Brethren, you have now, by the blessing of God, for several years, renew'd with no just offence to any, tho with the grief, and envy perhaps of some, who

are not of our Houſhold of Faith; but to the comfort of all that are; for the preſent benefit, and relief of many, and with well-grounded hopes, and preſages of much greater things for the future.

Of theſe our Annual Solemnities there being two principal intentions; the one to anſwer a moſt unjuſt objection of the Enemies to the Married Clergy, by ſhewing a full appearance of their Children, who are in a condition to credit the Church, and ſerve their Countrey; The other, for relieving thoſe of the ſame deſcent, who may have been reduc'd to Diſtreſs, and Poverty: For the firſt of theſe, I need no other Defence, no other Commendation, than this very Company, to which I ſpeak. For what Argument, either Civil, or Eccleſiaſtical, can juſtify, can commend the Marriage of Churchmen, and Vindicate our whole Reformation on that Account, if this Sight be not ſufficient to do it? This Aſſembly? The Lawful Off-ſpring of ſuch Marriages, the genuine Seed, the proper Iſſue of the Reformation; and if you permit me to ſay it, I dare ſay, the Honour of it too. An aſſembly compos'd of Men conſiderable in all worthy Profeſſions; eminent in many ways of Life; All honeſt ways,

ſome

ſome venerable, ſome honourable: Men favour'd by God in your Birth, your Education, your ſeveral Stations in this World: So far above what the Adverſaries of our Church moſt injuriouſly upbraid, ſo far above contempt or meanneſs, that you are plentifully bleſs'd by our Gracious God with Abilities; and, which is more, endued by him with hearts too, to do good to others.

In that part therefore of our deſign in this Meeting, which concerns the Vindication of our whole Race; I will uſe no other Apology; if I intended a Panegyrick, I ſhould need no other, but only this one unanſwerable, living Argument, which you your ſelves here preſent afford me.

The other great end of it, which is Charity towards thoſe of the like Original with our ſelves, whom their neceſſities may have made unable, aſham'd perhaps, to appear amongſt us at this time: The Recommendation of ſo prudent, ſo pious a work, deſerves certainly to be the chief Subject of the Preacher, the chief Duty of the Hearers, and Preacher, in all ſuch Aſſemblies of Men of our extraction; and in this of this Year, in a ſpecial manner, for an extraordinary cauſe.

For

For your former worthy beginnings of this kind having lately receiv'd incouragement by a Royal Eſtabliſhment; I cannot but believe that this advantage has inſpir'd all your hearts with the moſt chearful reſolutions, to perfect, by the help of ſo great a Patronage, what you your ſelves had before ſo generouſly attempted: That what you have hitherto done in your private bounty, as a ſecret Free will Offering, you will perſevere to do, and do much more, now you are invited to it by publick Authority; now you are admitted by the King himſelf into a ſhare with him, as I may ſay, in one of his moſt Eſa. 49. 23. Sacred Offices; are become *Nurſing Fathers* too of the Church: He of the flouriſhing part; you under him, of the Afflicted part of the Church of *England*.

Wherefore, intreating firſt your favourable Interpretation, that by reaſon of the Sickneſs of a Reverend Prelate, who had undertaken this Employment, I have been over-ruled to approach this place, ſo much out of my own order, ſo very much in all things unequal to thoſe, who have gone before me; that I may (now I am here) be ſomewhat ſerviceable to the great Charitable deſign of this Congregation, I have choſen to ſpeak on this

this Scripture: In which we find a ſerious Exhortation of the Apoſtle to all manner of Charity, In its largeſt extent; *The doing good to all Men*! And then directed, and limited in two particulars, of Time, and Perſons. It is to be practiſed with regard to ſome Times above others: We are to do good, *As we have an opportunity*. It ſhould be with a careful choice and preference of ſome Perſons above others: To All, but *eſpecially to the Houſhold of Faith*.

According to this plain Method, my following Diſcourſe will be moſt naturally divided.

Firſt, As the Foundation of all, we are to ſuppoſe this moſt Chriſtian Principle, That, by the obligation of our Holy Faith, we are all indiſpenſably bound *to do good to all Men*.

Secondly, We may obſerve, That tho our Charity ſhould be Univerſal, yet as it cannot be actually exerciſed, but on particular times, ſo it ſhould be chiefly on ſpecial *opportunities*.

Thirdly, We muſt conclude, That the true, Evangelical Charity may, and ſhould admit of different meaſures and degrees; tho it ought not to be confined to any, yet ſhould principally be applied *to the Houſhold of Faith*.

That

That the true Profeſſion of Chriſtianity inviolably engages all its followers, to do good to all Men, I will not here much labour to prove, but rather take it for granted; the very repetition of this truth giving a ſufficient confirmation to it, in any Aſſembly of true Chriſtians; much more in ſuch a one, as you are; whoſe Fathers, by Virtue of their Holy Office, were appointed the ſpecial Guardians of the great Doctrine of Charity, and Teachers of it to the reſt of the World. To you therefore it may well be eſteemed as a domeſtic Doctrine, received by you almoſt with your firſt Milk, as one of the very firſt Elements of your Religion.

A Doctrine, that is repreſented to our imperfect indeed, but yet to our ſincere imitation, in the glorious, primitive Patern of moſt perfect, moſt adorable Goodneſs in the Divine Nature it ſelf: By which the whole Frame of the Creation, the whole ſtock of Mankind, the ſound, the unſound part, the good, the bad, were all made, and have been always ſuſtained, and encompaſſed with ſuch inexpreſſible Grace, ſuch abounded Mercy, as is always ready for thoſe that deſire it; always finds out thoſe that ſeek for it; often ſtands in the way of thoſe that would avoid it; and

and overtakes them that flye from it.

From that moſt bleſſed Original of doing good, that is eſſential to the infinite Being of our Creator, we have an excellent Copy Tranſcribed for all our uſe in the Goſpel; here made neceſſary to us by innumerable Precepts; here illuſtrated to us by a moſt Gracious Example; here made eaſie for us by Promiſes of Divine Aſſiſtance; here rendred pleaſant and profitable to us by aſſurance of unſpeakable Rewards.

This Doctrine of Gods good-will towards Men; this command of Mens proportionable good-will to one another, is not this the very Body and Subſtance, this the very Spirit and Life of our Saviours whole Inſtitution? It is intermingled with all the Truths He teaches: It overſpreads and gives one colour to all his Precepts; 'tis the very diſtinguiſhing Character of the Chriſtian Law; By which that has exceeded, and advanced all the true Dictates of Natural Reaſon; by which it has excell'd, and put to ſhame all the beſt Pretences of falſe Worſhips; nay, by which God himſelf ſeems to have made the laſt Addition to his own Diſcoveries and Inſtructions to Mankind: For as in many other things the Goſpel appears in reſpect

reſpect of the Law to be a clearer Revelation of the myſtical part; ſo in this it is apparently a far more benign, more generous Diſpenſation of the practical part of the True Religion.

In this matter, what need we Chriſtians be our own Witneſſes, or our own Judges? We might refer the Examination of it to any ſober judicious Heathen, or unprejudic'd *Jew*, if any ſuch could be found. 'Tis true, they might at firſt ſight obſerve the common practice of too many, that call themſelves Chriſtians, to be very different from the Doctrine they ſeem to own. They might juſtly wonder, that Men ſo taught, ſo obliged to be kind to all, gentle to Strangers, merciful to the Afflicted, loving even to Enemies, ſhould behave themſelves in every point ſo contrary to ſuch Heavenly Inſtructions, ſuch indiſſoluble Obligations! That ſo many, that any fierce, ſtubborn, revengeful, avaritious, uncharitable Paſſions could poſſibly ſpring up under the ſhadow of ſuch a Religion! nay, that ſome Men ſhould make ſuch a Religion, and their Zeal for it, to be the pretence, and excuſe even to juſtifie, even to ſanctifie ſuch paſſions!

All this the Adverſaries of the Faith have too much reaſon to object againſt too many

many of its Profeſſors; but againſt the Faith it ſelf nothing at all. In that all things of this Nature muſt excite their admiration, or overwhelm them with confuſion. Should the Wiſeſt Heathen ſearch into all the higheſt Flights of their beſt Moraliſts; ſhould the moſt devout *Jew* recollect the moſt Virtuous Counſels, and Traditions of their Patriarchs, and Prophets; and then ſhould both theſe compare what they can find in either of them, with the free-ſpirited, the large-hearted, the Univerſally-charitable deſign of the whole Tenour of our Bleſſed Saviours teaching, and Life; and that unanimouſly expounded by all the inſpired Writers after him; and they muſt both at laſt agree, that here are introduc'd far more Heroick Principles of Meekneſs, Forgiveneſs, Bounty, and Magnanimity, than ever all the Learning of the Heathens could invent, or all the antiquity of the *Jews* could boaſt of.

What could the Light of Nature, what could the Moſaical ſhadows, which yet were clearer than that; what could either of theſe produce that is comparable to the true Evangelical Spirit? By our Law of doing Good, no good is to be left undone towards all, not the good of the Tongue, the

the Hand, the Heart; none is to be done unwillingly to any; none only for our own ſakes; none only in one ſeaſon, but always. Here are confirm'd all our other Natural, Civil, Political ties of Mutual good Offices; nay, here, when they are not, or cannot be Mutual: Here many New Titles of Kindneſs, many New Relations of Endearment are ſuperadded to them: Here the Foundations, the Deſires, the occaſions of Envy, Malice, Coveteouſneſs, Revenge are Aboliſh'd: Here a new race of Virtues, and Graces more Divine, more Moral, more Humane are planted in their ſtead.

If I will believe, and obey the Goſpel, no difference of outward condition, no Calamity, no Miſery can make any Man not to be equal to me, or to deſerve my neglect: No diſtance of Place, no ſtrangeneſs of Country, no contrariety of Temper, or Intereſt can make any Man a Stranger to me, or to deſerve my Indifference: No ill Will, no ill Speech, no ill Deed of another againſt me, can make any Man an Enemy to me, or to deſerve my Hatred. With Men indeed theſe Conſiderations are uſually, naturally the Cauſes of Deſpite, Diſdain, or averſion from others: But with God they ſeem to

paſs

paſs for ſo many New Reaſons of our greater Tenderneſs towards others; even as ſo many New degrees of our Conſanguinity with them.

Should we not do good to Strangers? The Goſpel allows no ſuch term, as a *Stranger:* makes every Man my *Neighbour.* Should we not *forgive our Enemies*? thoſe that Curſe, Perſecute, and would Deſtroy us? The Goſpel knows no ſuch thing, as an *Enemy. We are to bleſs, to pray for, to love our Enemies:* and if not for that very Reaſon, yet notwithſtanding it. Ought we not to pity, and ſupply the Poor, and afflicted, though they have no Relation to us? That cannot be. The Goſpel ſtyles them all, our Brethren: Nay, they have a nearer Relation to us, our Fellow Members: and both theſe from their Relation to our Saviour himſelf; who calls them his Brethren, his Members; and makes them his proper Charge, his peculiar Care: Titles of Honour and Priviledges which the Rich, and the Great, as ſuch, can never deſerve; and will never have, unleſs they employ their Riches, and Greatneſs, for the help, and protection of theſe the true Wards, and Children, and Friends of God. Mat. 5. 44

Wherefore ſince we are to do good, to the Poor, to Strangers, to Enemies; thoſe whom Nature is too apt to make us Deſpiſe, Diſregard, or Hate; then undoubtedly we are to do good *to all Men*, To all Men, *as we have an opportunity*, which is my ſecond particular.

I cannot but take Notice of the fullneſs of the Original Phraſe in this place. For tho it is evident, that the Holy Ghoſt is ſcarce ever ſo Various, and Copious, and Efficacious, on any one Divine Argument, as when it recommends to us the great Duty of Charity; yet there are few expreſſions, on this very ſubject, ſo expreſſive; none, I think, more Powerful than this, throughout the whole Scripture.

Firſt, 'tis here ſaid, ἐργαζώμεθα, a word that ſignifies, not only ſome empty good will, and good wiſhes; Not only ſome verbal aſſiſtance, or the cold comfort of barren promiſes; not only ſome ſlender kind of good work, perform'd by chance, with little coſt, or no pains; But an active, expenſive, indefatigable goodneſs; ſuch as our Apoſtle, elſewhere, in two ſeveral places, calls *a work, and labour of Love.*

1 Theſſ. 1. 3. Heb. 6. 10.

Se-

Secondly, 'tis ſaid, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν, which may be tranſlated not only *doing Good*, but *the Good*; the Good, I ſuppoſe, that others Neceſſities moſt call for, and our Circumſtances moſt enable us to perform; and ſo implying much cautious Care, and Circumſpection, in ſuiting the kinds of our Relief to our own Abilities, and to the Wants of thoſe we would relieve. And a doing Good in this wiſe manner, this truly-Goſpel Senſe, is a wonderful addition to the good action it ſelf. Of ſo beautiful, and amiable a thing as *Charity* is, nothing can more increaſe the Luſtre, and Beauty, than a prudent Election of Objects, and a fit application of it to them. In good Works, as in all other good things, there may be Goodneſs in the general, but Decence, and Gracefulneſs can be only in the particulars, in doing the Good.

Thirdly therefore, To make this Decence of our Beneficence compleat, 'tis added, That we muſt do it, ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν· *As we have Opportunity*. Moſt of the Learned Verſions only render it, *whileſt we have time*: whileſt by the Favour, and Long-ſuffering of Almighty God, our frail, and uncertain Lives are, for this very end, prolong'd to us in this World:

which is our chief Opportunity of doing Good; as after this Life, begins God's chief Opportunity of recompensing us for so doing. But in all Works of Bounty, and Liberality, something more is to be consider'd besides the occasion of the Givers: and that is the Occasion of the Receivers; and therefore our Translation takes in both, rightly says, not only whilst we have time, but, *as we have opportunity.*

Opportunity is in respect to time, in some sense, as Time is in respect to Eternity. 'Tis the small Moment, the exact Point, the critical Minute, on which every Good Work so much depends; that whenever you just light upon it, it is able to make all your Religious Performances more Easy to your selves, more beneficial to others, more acceptable to God himself. Has not every common Action of Life, every Virtue in Morality, and so every Grace in Christianity its due Season, its proper Time? Out of which, whenever it is practis'd, I will not say, it changes its Natures, and becomes evil; but most truly it loses very much of the comeliness, and vigour, and ornament of its Goodness.

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There is, says the Wiseman, *a season, and time*, that is, *an opportunity to every thing*: the same which the Poet means, when he says, καιρὸς δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστος. So your Christian Fortitude, and Patience have their *opportunity*, in times of Affliction, and Persecution: So your Temperance, and Humility have theirs, in Plenty, and Prosperity, especially unexpected Prosperity; so your Devotion has its *opportunity*: *We must Pray always*, but chiefly at certain times: On stated Days, in most solemn Places: So your Fasting, Contrition and Mortification, when the Church and State appoints, and that especially in times of greater Riot and Luxury: So true Zeal, in times overflowing with Atheism and Prophaneness: so Moderation and Christian Prudence, in times abounding with blind and furious Zeal: so all the rest; so Charity has its *Opportunity*, as well as the rest. Eccles. 3. 1. Hesiod. Ἔργα κὴ Ἡμ. Ephes. 6. 18.

Indeed so Diffusive, so Comprehensive, so Catholick a Grace is Charity, above any of the rest, that whatever time is the special *Opportunity* of any other Moral Virtue, or Christian Grace, that very time is also the special *Opportunity* of Charity. It must immediately, inseparably attend all your Christian Fortitude, your Patience, your Devotion, your Mortification, your

Prudence, your Zeal. In whatever Heart' or Head any one of these takes possession, it must never go single; it must bring Charity with it, or it is there it self in vain.

Ps. 145. 9 *Mercy is over all God's Works*, and would be in all ours.

Such is the large *Opportunity* of Charity, whereby it is made the constant Companion and Perfection of all Virtues; impower'd to enter into every one of their Provinces: and well it is for that Vertue, where it most enters, and longest stays.

1 Cor. 13. Indeed so much Employment it has, that whoever shall read over St. *Paul*'s Enumeration of the Duties incumbent upon it, he might almost conclude, that well-nigh the whole business of Christianity is

Verse 7. laid on the shoulders of Charity alone. *Charity bears all, believes all, hopes all, endures all*, and much more to the same purpose. What can be spoken more effectually? Whereas the same Apostle, in

Verse 13. the same Chapter, tells us, That *of the three things which remain, Faith, Hope and Charity, the greatest is Charity*; here much more is said; not only that it is greater than Faith and Hope, but that *it believes all, hopes all it self*: has all these other Graces, and their *Opportunities*, contained within it self.

Cer-

Certainly therefore Charity is the τὸ ἀγαθὸν here intended; not only a good, not only the chief good, but that without which nothing elſe can be good.

Yet beſides this general *Opportunity* of Charity, which, you ſee, is common to it with all other goodneſs: it has alſo many Opportunities peculiar to it ſelf. As when it is to be practis'd towards perſons of great, and undeſerv'd Wants, or of extraordinary Merits, or of extraordinary Demerits: That is one great *Opportunity* of Charity. Or when in places, that can ſhew very few, and little, or very great, and many inſtances of Beneficence: That is another of its *Opportunities*; that where there are few, and ſmall Examples of good works, they may be increas'd; where there are many, and great, they may be encouraged to continue. Or in times of publick Faſting, Mourning, and Humiliation; that is another *Opportunity* of it: For the beſt Sign, and Fruit of denying our ſelves, is mercy to others. Or in times of Thankſgiving, of remarkable Temporal, or Spiritual Bleſſings; in times of Joy, and Feaſting, and Enlargement of Heart; that is another. In all ſuch times, when we more freely enjoy the bounty of God our ſelves; we make it

an imputation to us, if we do not take care, that others alſo ſhall partake of ſome good by it. Such honeſt refreſhments, and comforts of Life, our Chriſtian Liberty has made it lawful for us to uſe: Our Temperance, and Sobriety in uſing them, will make them innocent: But nothing can render them truely Chriſtian Comforts, except the mixture of ſome good work of Kindneſs, and Liberality with them.

Judev. 12. And therefore the only Feaſts we read of in Scripture, amongſt the Primitive Chriſtians, beſides the great Feaſt of the Holy Communion, were their ἀγάπαι, their Feaſts of Charity. *Cicero* brings in *Cato* reproving the Levity of the *Greeks*, for calling their Feſtival Meetings συμπόσια, from their drinking then together; and rather commends the Gravity of the *Romans*, who Nam'd ſuch Meetings *Convivia*, from their Living, and Converſing then together. But we Chriſtians have another Mannner of Example to follow, from our firſt Predeceſſors ἀγάπαι: of which the very word may teach us our duty in them: For theſe took their Name not from the Mirth, not from the Converſation, but only from the Charity of the Gueſts. That indeed, is the only thing,

De Senectute.

Tertul. Apo. cap. 39. *where they are deſcribed.*

thing, that can ſeaſon all our Mirth, that can ſanctify all our Freedom on ſuch times: That indeed, is the only true Chriſtian Life.

I come in the Third place to examine, what ought to be the proper object of a Chriſtians doing good. It muſt be done to all, but *eſpecially to the Houſhold of Faith*: Which is the laſt particular in my Text.

'Tis manifeſt throughout the Bible, that beſides the whole compaſs of Heaven, and Earth; in which God is pleas'd to reſide, therefore calling *the one his Throne, the other his Foot-ſtool*; tho both are far from containing his Immenſity; but, beſides that more ample Habitation of his Power, he has always condeſcended to take to himſelf, amongſt the Sons of Men, a peculiar *Houſhold* of his Love: Which, in all times, he has cheriſh'd as a Father, by his ſpecial Providence and Affection; and govern'd, as a Maſter, by a private Oeconomy of his own. Mat. 5. 34, 35.

This is the proper *Houſhold of Faith*. And in the firſt Ages of the World, 'twas ſometimes literally no more than a ſingle Houſhold, or ſome few Families. Before the Fall of our firſt Parents, it could be no otherwiſe; and after it too

'twas

'twas ſo for ſeveral Generations: Whileſt the Myſteries and Worſhip of the true Religion, were almoſt confined to the Succeſſion of one beloved Race, and the reſt of Mankind left to be, what they had made themſelves, *Aliens and Strangers.*

Eph. 2. 12.

Nor ought any to repine on this account, at the unſearchable Judgments of God, that ſo many were at once excluded out of his Family. Ought not all rather, we eſpecially, to admire and adore his apparent Mercy, that any were ſtill permitted to have a right in it; ſince none could merit, all had forfeited that right?

But in proceſs of time, when this choſen Family was Multiplyed into a Nation, that Nation too became the *Houſhold of Faith*; a greater, but ſtill a Houſhold: Limited in its Members, almoſt to one People; in its publick Worſhip, almoſt to one Houſe: But ſtill a *Houſhold of Faith*: A *Faith*, that was true, tho obſcure; a *Faith*, that had then the hope *of things not ſeen*, tho it was not, as afterwards under the Goſpel, *the Evidence of ſuch things.*

Heb. 11. 1.

Under the Goſpel indeed the next, and the greateſt increaſe of this *Houſhold of Faith*

Faith has been made: When, by the Univerſal adminiſtration of Grace, begun by our bleſſed Saviour, enlarged by his Apoſtles, carried on by their immediate Succeſſors, and to be compleated by the reſt to the Worlds End; all Types that darken'd this Faith, are enlighten'd; all Veils, that hid it, are rent, and taken away; all *Walls of preparation broken* Eph. 2. *Down*; all confinement to Families, or 14. People, all Narrowneſs of Opinions removed; all Nations under Heaven invited; ſome of all received into this *Houſhold*: Which therefore has taken to it ſelf, as it deſerves, the moſt *Auguſt* Name of *Catholick*; that, without it, no other Houſe, nor Religion, nor Empire could ever juſtly claim; nor within it, can any one Church above others rightly pretend to it, but only all together, united in the ſame Faith, the ſame Hope, the ſame Charity.

Such have been the different extents of this *Houſhold of Faith*, through all its Succeſſions. And what all along were the different ranks? What the diſtinct Offices? What degrees of Priviledge, and Command maintain'd amongſt all its Members? None at all? Yes, certainly very much of all. In ſo Divine a *Houſ-*

Houſhold, ſo united in one *Faith*, were there no other Means of Order, or Methods of Union? No Superiority of ſome? No ſubmiſſion of others? No reverence towards any? How could it then be a *Houſhold*? A Herd of wild Beaſts on the Mountains, a ſavage Drove of Men in Caves might be ſo order'd, or rather ſo diſorder'd: But never a *Family*, a *City*, a *People*, *a peculiar People*; all which the *Houſhold of Faith* is often called: For to all theſe Obedience, and Subordination, Government, and Subjection are moſt neceſſary for their well-being, for their being in a Civil State; certainly therefore as neceſſary to a Spiritual Family, and City, and People.

Eph. 3. 15. Chap. 2. 19. 1 Pet 2. 9. Tit. 2. 14.

Can there be any reaſon imaginable, why the *Houſhold* of God alone ſhould throw off all that Rule, and Diſcipline, that orderly dependence, and Duty, and Service, by which all other Houſes in the World are beſt Govern'd? Nay, by which they can only be well Govern'd? No. So far is an indiſtinction of all Perſons, or equality of all Orders, and, by Conſequence, an Anarchy of all things; ſo far from being agreeable to the Will of God; declared in the Beautiful, and Harmonious frame of his great Houſhold, the,

World

World, and eſpecially in all the Miniſteries of proper houſhold, the Church; that there was never yet any time, ſince the Church was a conſiderable Number; I believe, ſince it was a Number; when ſome of its Members were not more Sacred than others, when ſome were not appointed Spiritual Rulers, ſome Temporal Governours, ſome both over others.

The *Patriarchs* were indubitably inveſted with both theſe Authorities. In *Moſes*, and *Aaron* they were divided in Perſons; but ſtill united as in Brethren. In the *Jewiſh* State, of which every part was of Gods own preſcribing; 'tis needleſs to tell, how great was the Preeminence of the Preiſtly Office; how Sacred their Degrees; how Separate, how Plentiful their Maintenance.

Or if that Example be not Spiritual, be not Chriſtian enough: What can be more Chriſtian, more Spiritual, than our bleſſed Saviours making the like diſtinctions between his own Evangelical Miniſters? His ſending not all his Diſciples equally, but firſt his Apoſtles, and them chiefly? And his impowering them to ſend others with the like differences? As is plain from their practiſe. And of thoſe very Apoſtles (for I ſee not, why, as we paſs, we

may

may not plead our own cauſe too) o thoſe Apoſtles ſome, even the greateſt, Married Men; of their Succeſſors many Married Men: All endued with indeliable power from above, to Feed, to Govern this Houſhold; to Create, to continue a Succeſſion in it; to Conſecrate, to ordain Paſtors, and Stewards of it, to the Worlds end: All worthy of Livelyhood, ſome of Honour, and, if we will believe Saint *Paul*, even in the Times of greateſt Purity and Simplicity, *ſome worthy of double honour.*

Luk. 10. 7.

1 Tim. 5. 17.

We have now diſcover'd, what is the true *Houſhold of Faith:* In general, the *whole Company of the Faithful*, divided in Times, and Places, joyn'd in *One Myſtical Houſhold:* In a particular, more eminent manner, the *Miniſters of that Houſhold*, the *Diſpenſers of that Faith:* and ſo many of the beſt Interpreters underſtand my Text.

Hence therefore we behold to whom all Chriſtians are *to do good:* To all Men; eſpecially to all Chriſtians; more eſpecially to all the Miniſters of Chriſt. And this being laid down, as undeniable, if you give me leave to make *One ſhort ſtep* farther, we may then, by an eaſy and neceſſary conſequence, reduce this general

Advice

Advice to our preſent, particular purpoſe.

For if the Fathers, and Husbands of thoſe, whoſe Relief this your Meeting intends, were *unqueſtionably of the Houſhold of Faith*, both as the Members and Miniſters of it; and if on that account all were eſpecially *to do good to them*; then certainly their Relicts, and Children cannot be Strangers in this *Houſhold*; ought not to be Strangers to the *Good*, that is done in it, if they want it. If to the Miniſters of Chriſt, whileſt Living, *all are to do good*, as *to the Chief Officers of the Houſhold of Faith*; then certainly, when they have ceaſed from their Labours, at leaſt as much *to their Poſterity*; to whom there is *near the ſame Obligation*, too frequently a *far greater need*, and *occaſion of doing good*. And if all Chriſtians are *bound to do good*, in a peculiar manner, *to the Houſhold of Faith*, ſo underſtood; then no doubt *thoſe of the Houſhold it ſelf*, who are in ſome Eſtate of *Proſperity*, which, God be praiſed, is *your Caſe*, have much *ſtronger ties to do good to the other Members of the ſame Houſhold*, who are in Adverſity.

You now ſee, Reverend, and Beloved in our Lord and Saviour, the Courſe of my

my Text has brought us to the great Design of this our Assembly; which is mercy to those distressed Persons, who have the same Relation to this *Houshold of Faith* with our selves. But before I come to them, I beseech your Patience, whilst I speak something to our selves here present. To whom, from what has been said, methinks a little seasonable Counsel, some honest, humble intreaties at least, are due from me at this time; as from all of us a relief is due to the others.

We have heard our Common, our Proper Title to the *Houshold of God* laid open before us. We find our selves inrolled in this heavenly Family, as Servants, as Sons, as Sons to the Chief, and most Sacred part of this Family. The best Philologers say, That the Original Word, οἰκεῖος, which is here translated *of the Houshold*, does not only signifie Domestick, as oppos'd to Foreign, to those without doors; but also private, as oppos'd to common, and those that are only just within doors. On both these Senses our claim is founded. We are not only *of the Houshold*, out of which a great part of the World is excluded; but we are more privately, more intimately *of the Houshold*, in which a great part of the

the Faithful are only as common Members.

Thus we have all a double Relation to it: ſome of us a Threefold: All of us as Chriſtians; all as Sons of the Miniſters of Chriſt: ſome not only ſo, but as Miniſters our ſelves. And can our Duty then be ſingle? Is there nothing expected from us, more than from other Chriſtians? Does our greater Privilege require nothing from us, but what is Common? Yes certainly very much. Let me briefly put you in mind, what it is.

Firſt, Since we claim a proper Intereſt, above others, in the Pre-eminent Rights of the *Houſhold of Faith*, then, no doubt, to make good that claim, we are all proportionably oblig'd above others, to conform to the proper Manners, and Virtues, that belong to, and become this *Houſhold*, and diſtinguiſh it from all others: then, no doubt, if in every one of ſuch Virtues, whether they reſpect God, or Man, we do not exceed others, we ſcarce do our Ordinary Duty: what great Deficience is it, if we come ſhort of Others! what hainous ſhame, if we Notoriouſly Offend in the oppoſite ſins!

We have far greater Obligations than all others to do good: we have not ſo much as the Falſe Excuſes, that ſome others may think they have, to do Evil. If we forſake the ways of *Grace and Goodneſs*, we cannot alledge any *colour of Ignorance*, or *want of Inſtruction*: we cannot ſay we have not learn'd them, or we could not: Nay, we cannot ſay, we have *forgot* them. They were familiar to us from our Cradles; imprinted on our Childiſh Memories; inſinuated into our tendereſt Age; endear'd to us by the neareſt Examples. Virtue in us is not only our Duty, but ſhould be our Portion, our Inheritance. Vice in us were not only Wickedneſs, but Apoſtacy, degenerate Wickedneſs.

Wherefore of thoſe Graces, which no Chriſtian can be without, we ought to exhibit in a greater meaſure: of thoſe which adorn a Chriſtian Life, we ſhould aſpire to the moſt excellent degree. Far ſhould be from us not only *ſcandalous Evil*, but all *the leaſt appearance of Evil:* and, as *Cæſar* ſaid of his Houſe, not only the Sin, but the *Suſpicion*. That ſpotleſs modeſty of private, and publick Life, that Sobriety of Converſation, that mildneſs of Behaviour, that Innocence, that Benignity

nity of Words, and Actions, that Liberal, that Generous Spirit, which all other Christians ought to labour after, should look in us, as if they were natural to us, and born with us. In those good things, which all others are to study, and imitate, we are to give, some of us Rules, all of us Examples. What all others should practise, we should scarce know how to practise otherwise.

I urge this the rather, because we live in an Age, when there is an Universal Complaint, (and God knows, there is too much reason for it,) of an Universal *Corruption of Good Manners*. The *Complaint* indeed is far more general, than the *Endeavours to redress it*. Abroad every Man would be a Reformer, how very few at Home? But, in truth, if all would really intend an Amendment, and set about it in good earnest, I cannot imagine any more likely means to effect it, than to have it seriously begun, and steddily carried on by men of our Birth.

Great and Powerful; I am confident, irresistible would be the influence, which this very Assembly would have *on the whole Kingdom*. *If Judgment begins at the House of God*, says Saint Peter, 17. 1 Pet. 4.

ter, where ſhall the ungodly and wicked appear? And why ſhould we not expect that *Judgment will begin at the Houſe of God*, if *Reformation begins not there*? But then let me add, if *Reformation begins at the Houſhold of God*, where *ſhall Ungodlineſs and Wickedneſs appear*? Your Examples will meet it at every Turn, and put it out of Countenance in every Place: Even in private Corners 'twill ſoon loſe that Confidence, which now it too much aſſumes in publick.

Secondly, This Conſideration, *That we are all united in One Houſhold, are all of the more inward part of the ſame Houſhold*, may ſuggeſt to us all, That *we eſpecially of all Men, of all Chriſtians, ought moſt to promote Unity amongſt our ſelves, and others*.

I beſeech you miſtake me not. I do not only mean *our Unity in matters of Religion*. That amongſt us, I ſuppoſe I cannot reaſonably ſuſpect, that any of us ſhould be Diſſatisfied with, or Diſobedient to the Church of *England*. I cannot fancy, That thoſe little Scruples, and Groundleſs Prejudices, and Weakneſſes of Conſcience, inſtead of Tenderneſs, which Miſlead too many others, too many, otherwiſe *Good Men*; ſhould find

find place in any of our Minds, againſt ſo Pure, ſo Pious, ſo Regular, ſo Moderate a Church; at whoſe Breaſts we were *more than ordinarily nouriſh'd*: A Church, which deſerves to be to all a *Common Mother*, and is *to us ſo much more than a Common Mother*.

Wherefore I will not, I need not untake to exhort you to an Eccleſiaſtical Union within *your ſelves*. I am rather ready to congratulate that to you. But there is another Unity, which, next that in Spiritual Things, would be of all others moſt delightful to God himſelf, moſt Advantageous to our Countrey: and that is your endeavour after a Civil, a Political Union in the *whole Nation*; a fair, and candid Correſpondence between all ways of Life; a ſtrict and Friendly *Communion of good*, and *kind Offices*, between Men of all Ranks, and Profeſſions among us.

This is that, to which I would moſt earneſtly, and I believe I ſhould moſt ſeaſonably adviſe you all You know who has ſaid, *That every Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf is brought to deſolation: and every City, or Houſe divided againſt it ſelf, ſhall not ſtand.* And moſt certainly, nothing more ſhakes the Superſtructure, Mat. 12. 25.

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nothing more ſtrikes at the Foundation of any Society of men; nothing more diſables a Houſe, a City a Kingdom, from doing good and great things, than mean Diviſions between the ſeveral Orders, and Conditions of its Members: their narrow-hearted repinining at each others Gain; their ill conſtruction of each others advantages; their envying the Fruits of each others Labours: when one Trade, or Art, even thoſe, that ſhould be the moſt Liberal, ſhall make it their buſineſs to diſdain, and calumniate another; ſhall impute the Faults of any particular men, to the Diſcredit of any whole Calling: when any diſtinct way of life ſhall think, that all others enjoy too much Profit, or Power, or Honour; they alone too little.

What can be more deſtructive to *publick Quiet and Concord*? What to a *private, eaſy, and honeſtly pleaſant Life*, than in full peace to have, as it were, an Open War between all Profeſſions? for any of the *Clergy* to murmur againſt the Priviledges of the *Laity?* for any of the *Laity* invidiouſly to aggravate the Rights and Immunities of the *Clergy*? For *Churchmen* to look with a greedy, or Malicious Eye, on the Incomes, or Preferments

ferments of Lawyers, or Phyſicians, or Merchants, or the Gentry, without weighing their Hazards, and Expences? For any of theſe, without regarding the pains and burdens of Church-men, to grudge, or upbraid to them thoſe ſmall Remains of Ancient Piety, which the Rapacity of ſome Ages has left, ſcarce left to the Church?

Whether this be not on all ſides, a moſt ill-natur'd, moſt pernicious Temper; whether it has not too much ſower'd, and infected the Humour of too many of *our Countreymen*, I leave you to judge; yet not only to judge; but to you of all men living, the Cure of this Diſtemper is to be recommended. You are not only the moſt proper, but, I believe, the Only Inſtruments capable of Effecting this Happy Work. Unſpeakable is the Opportunity to this End, which is in your Power, that no other Generation of Men can equally pretend to.

'Tis an Evident Obſervation, That no other One Race, not the Sons of any one other Profeſſion, not perhaps all together, are ſo much ſcatter'd amongſt All Profeſſions, All Ways of Life, as the *Sons of Clergy-men alone*. Of moſt

others the Children are commonly bred up in their Fathers Way; or ſo plentifully provided for, that they are left at large; ſome few permitted to venture on the Church. But with Churchmen 'tis far otherwiſe Their Children, we ſee, flow abroad, are confin'd to none, overſpread all our Ways of Breeding, and Life: our Shops, our Schools, our Univerſities, our Inns of Court, our College of Phyſicians, our Towns, our Countrey, our Court, our Cities; This Court, This City eſpecially.

Acts 8.4. And if the diſperſion of the Church from *Jeruſalem* by reaſon of Perſecution, firſt into all *Judea*, then into all the World, became, by Gods wonderful Providence, the chief cauſe of enlarging the Goſpel: Why may not we hope, that the Sons of the Church being ſo much diſpers'd, tho, God be thanked, without being driven, into all quarters of the Land, there was ſome extraordinary deſign of Divine Wiſdom in it? Certainly yes, certainly 'twas intended, that we ſhould carry along with us into all other places, and Profeſſions, wherever our Stations are allotted, ſome of thoſe good, and virtuous qualities, which we were ſtrangely

ſtrangely careleſs, if we did not bring from home with us: Something of that meek, condeſcending, calm, affable, reconciling, compoſed, compoſing Spirit; which if Churchmen, and their Progeny have not, they cannot pretend to any other Virtues.

We were all born, and grew up in the very native Soil of Modeſty, Humility, Peace, and Unity. And if we ſhall neglect to Propagate theſe bleſſed diſpoſitions, in all the other ſoils, where ſo many of us are Tranſplanted: What others can we expect ſhall do it? What others can undertake it, without ſome blemiſh to us? Some reflexion on our negligence? But if we ſhall endeavour it with Diligence and Conſtancy, we need not doubt but, by the ordinary Bleſſing of God, our labors in this kind will prove the fortunate means, to make theſe Virtues thrive elſewhere, ſpread every where.

For proof of all I have ſaid, concerning the probability, the certainty of reforming, and uniting the whole Nation by our Example; I crave leave only to ſet before you an Image, of what would ſurely be done to this purpoſe, in this one City: Which may well be reckon'd not only the ſeat of Trade, and Commerce, not

not only the Fountain of Habits, and Faſhions, and good Breeding, but of morally-good, or bad manners to all *England*.

Throughout the whole extent of this vaſt City, I know, there is no one Ward, no Pariſh; I believe, no Street, not many Lanes, where there does not live one or more, that have our Relation to the Church: And live generally in ſo good a rank, as will rather invite, than Diſcourage others, to follow what they ſhall practiſe.

Now then, if amongſt you of our number, who are Citizens, there were at once begun, by common conſent, an Univerſal amendment of Life, and Converſation: If we ſhall make it our unanimous buſineſs, to oppoſe the particular Vices of the time, by their contrary Virtues; Schiſm by Unity; Hypocriſie by Sober Piety; Debauchery by Temperance; miſtaken Zeal by true Zeal, and the like: If ſo, then the change will ſoon appear remarkable; the Example will be ſpreading; Favour, Authority, Credit, Cuſtome, and at laſt Number too will be on the ſide of Grace, and Goodneſs. And (if you remember, how your City firſt roſe out of its Aſhes, after the dreadful fire, which, no doubt, you can never forget)

forget) as that was rebuilt, not preſently, by raiſing continued Streets, in any one part; but at firſt here a Houſe, and there a Houſe; to which others by degrees were joyn'd; till at laſt ſingle Houſes were united into whole Streets; whole Streets into one Beautiful City: So every one of your Houſes being firſt rais'd, and appearing eminent above others in Piety; others will ſoon take Pattern and Incouragement from your Building: And ſo Houſe by Houſe, Street by Street, there will at laſt be finiſh'd, not only, as before, a great, and a magnificent City; but, what is far better, *a City, that is at unity in it ſelf*; a Modeſt, a Grave, a Religious City: And *London* will in ſhort time as much excel it ſelf in all manner of Virtue, as even now, I dare affirm, it excels any other City in the whole World, that comes any thing near it, either in largeneſs, or Number of Inhabitants. Pſ. 122. 3

But laſtly, ſince we are all of one Spiritual *Houſhold*; and that not only in a Spiritual, but a Temporal Senſe: What remains to be ſaid, but that there ought to be maintain'd, between all the Members of this our *Houſhold*, a free, and uninterrupted Communication of our Spiritual, and our Temporal good things to each other?

other? From the wealthy, and able part, their Temporal good things of Bounty, and Munificence to the Poor, and unable amongſt us; from the poor and unable the return of their Spiritual good things, their Bleſſings, and Thanks, and Prayers; which cannot be a leſs good than they receive; nay, they will be a far greater benefit to the wealthy, and able, than theſe can beſtow on them.

I bleſs God, many of you here preſent are of the wealthy part; I ſee moſt of you are of the able; none, I hope, of the unable part. And it was my intention, to have tryed by an ample exhortation to excite your greateſt Ardour, and moſt fervent Zeal in this work. But I find, I have employed ſo much time, by the way, in other matters; That I cannot preſume on your Patience much longer. Yet my comfort is, that ſuch an Exhortation which the hour already ſpent would now make tedious; the free, and tender Nature of my Hearers has made unneceſſary. A much longer Diſcourſe my Argument requires: Your merciful Diſpoſitions a much ſhorter. Wherefore ſeeing it will be far better, for you your ſelves to reaſon with your ſelves on this ſubject, than for me, or any Man elſe, to load

load you with perſwaſions: I ſhall forbear enlarging, and only offer to your thoughts ſome few heads of conſideration.

You are now; Fathers, and Brethren; *Sons of the Prophets*; *and of the Covenant God made with your Fathers*, you are now, with happy, and auſpicious beginnings, forming a Model of Charity: Of a moſt Chriſtian, truly-Proteſtant Charity: Than which nothing can more fix the Root, nothing more ſpread the Branches, more cheriſh the tendereſt, and weakeſt Branches of the Reformation: Nothing more ſtop the Mouths of thoſe, who by forbidding Marriage to the Clergy, would introduce into the Catholick Church, what St. *Paul* calls *the Doctrine of Devils*. To confute theſe Men there were Arguments enough before, drawn from Religion, Scripture, and Antiquity. One Political Argument they ſeem'd to have, and boaſted of it, as unconfutable; That from ſuch Marriages would inevitably enſue Poverty in many of the Children, and thence a Diſgrace, and Burden to the whole Church. But, by this deſign, you have oppoſed their falſe Policy, with true, and great Wiſdom: What they boaded would be a miſchief to us; you are

1 Tim. 4. 1. *So interpreted by Biſhop* Sanderſon. Ser. 5. ad Pop

are providing ſhall be one of our principal ſtrengths: You have conſulted not only the ſtrength, but the fame of the beſt Reformed Church: And are freeing it, not only from the ſcandal of its Enemies, but even from its own greateſt defect, and inconvenience.

The opportunity, that is now put into your hands for this purpoſe, is peculiar, and extraordinary: Not only of this one day, or of other ſuch days, which, I truſt, will always ſucceed this once a year; but the ſure and ſolid Foundation of a perpetual Corporation: By which, under a Reign of the greateſt Mercy, and Clemency that ever the Sun beheld, you are Authorized to make this good work of Mercy a great one; call'd upon, many of you by Name, to do it, by Royal Authority; to which a conſtant obedience, and moſt dutiful obſervance has been ever the proper, unſullied Honour of your Church, and your Extraction.

The Perſons to be reliev'd by you, ſo nearly approach you all, in the ſtricteſt degrees, tho not often perhaps of Kindred, nor always of private Friendſhip; yet always of Birth, and Intereſt: That their ſupport may not only be call'd bounty in you, but the moſt Fatherly, or Bro-

Brotherly Tenderneſs, and even ſome kind of ſelf-love. From you their ſad Eſtate may well expect effectual comfort, ſince there are none, tho never ſo much ſtrangers to them, from whom it may not deſerve commiſeration. They were left deſtitute, ſome of Education, all of a ſubſiſtance ſuitable to their former Life; without any the leaſt fault of their own; without any poſſibility of their preventing it; either by the Narrow Proviſion their Husbands, or Parents enjoy'd, in their beſt condition: Or by the unavoidable fate of their untimely Deaths: Or no doubt ſome of them, by their frank hearts, and their open hands, and their Charity towards others, whilſt they lived: Or, which ought to be mention'd for their greater honour, by their Fidelity to the Crown, and ſufferings for the Church.

On theſe Accounts, all innocent, ſome praiſe-worthy, ſome honourable, they were expos'd to hardſhip, and penury; to which they had never been uſed, and which, without you, they could never have eſcaped. Nor was their Poverty all. That their Religion would have taught them to endure. But what was far more grievous, and deplorable, their Poverty had expos'd them to be a cauſe of ſcorn and

and deriſion, an objection againſt Religion it ſelf.

An objection, which now we ſhall happily ſee removed. For you, who have undertaken their relief, ſome of you by Gods bleſſing on your labours, ſome on your Studies, ſome by Gods, and the Churches bleſſing on your Eſtates, all of you by ſome bleſſing, or other, are abundantly furniſh'd with power; and I know, with affections; to contribute your ſhare to this work. So that tho it ſhould be true, as I fear it is, that never any time ſince the Reformation can ſhew ſo many poor amongſt the Widows, and Orphans of Churchmen, as this particular time: Yet I believe it to be as true, and we all ought to rejoice at it, that God, in his Mercy, has now more than ever, provided, and pointed out a proportionable ſupply for them, within our ſelves. As more Clergy-men were impoveriſh'd by the Calamities of the late War, and Oppreſſion of the Church and State, than ever in the like ſpace before: So, I think, it may be ſaid without Envy, I am ſure, if this work proceeds, it may, that more Clergy-men, or their Heirs, than ever in one time before, ſince they were allowed Marriage, have been brought to a plentiful,

tiful, and proſperous condition by his Majeſties, and with him the Churches, moſt happy Reſtoration.

What any of you, or your Fathers then received, was never a juſt objection againſt you, becauſe you only received what was juſt, and your own: Nay, it has been, and will be for ever, not only no objection, but for your praiſe, and honour; that of what you then gather'd, as moſt lawfully your own, you have ſince already diſpos'd ſo very much in works of publick Piety and Charity; and are ſtill ready to ſcatter much more on this occaſion, for the good of others.

Scatter much, do I ſay? There is no abſolute need of that. For towards your effectual carrying on of this deſign, nothing but what may eaſily conſiſt with your Plenty, your Proſperity; nothing that ſhall be any way burdenſome, is requeſted of you: Only what you can readily ſpare; from your neceſſities, your occaſions? No, but even from your pleaſures, your ſuperfluities; only that which to give away will be a kindneſs to your ſelves, as well as to others.

'Tis not the weight of Bounty, and good Works, from a few, ſo much as the Number from ſo many, that is expected

to make up and continue this heap. We have visible Instances in this City, where great, and well-nigh incredible effects are yearly accomplish'd towards maintaining the Poor of almost all Trades, and Callings, only by a constant multitude, and settled succession of small contributions wisely administred.

And I hope it will never be said, that the Laity, who by the Clergy are taught to be charitable, shall in their Corporations, exceed the Clergy it self, and their Sons, in freeness of giving. But if any shall think, that in the practical prudence of managing such gifts, the Laity may have some advantage over the Clergy; whose experience is, and ought to be less of this World than the others: That in your Corporations is most wisely supplied. As there are Churchmen enough in this Pious Foundation, most able to advise the good Works; so there are Laymen enough most able to direct their Uses.

To our Laity, and Clergy both, my Dear Friends, this Institution will turn to inestimable advantage; without giving the least reason to suspect, that any other course of former Charity will be dryed up, or diverted; but rather all of them will

will be much increas'd, and more filled by opening this new Fountain. Such is the Nature of all true Charity: The practice of it towards any, always enlarges Mens desires to practise it towards more: Indeed, as a Fountain it flows; always flowing, when once begun: The several parts of it not hindring, but either making way for, or pushing on each other.

Yet tho it be certain, that no other way of publick Charity has any just ground to be jealous of this; I cannot but add, that as to publick benefit, this will be inferiour to none, preferable to most others, if not to all: For by this means, not only many helpless Persons will be provided for, whilst they live; but a Generation of Men will be bred up, within our selves, not depending on any other Patrons, not perverted by any other hopes: And whose Principle, whose Judgment, whose Interest it will be to obey, and support our own Church and State, which cherishes a Married Clergy; to oppose a Foreign Church, that condemns it; but whose ill practices, for want of it, are one of the greatest Justifications of such Marriages.

In the Athenian State, which was the great Fountain of Learning, and Virtue *Æschin. cont. Ctesiph.*

to the Heathen World, one of the Nobleſt excitements to Honourable Actions, was, that the Children of thoſe, who had died ſerving their Country, were bred up at the Publick charge, till they came to the Age of Manhood: And were then brought forth to the People, clad all in Armour, one of their publick Miniſters Proclaiming before them; That hitherto, in remembrance of their Fathers Merits, the Commonwealth had educated theſe young Men, and now diſmis'd them ſo Arm'd, to go forth, and thank their Country, by imitating their Fathers Examples.

Methinks I may promiſe, and even foretel, that in your future Proceſſions on theſe days, we ſhall ſee ſuch a Train of Youth, by you ſo bred up, and prepar'd for the ſervice of Church, and State; to whom it may be ſaid: Thus far the memory of your Fathers deſerts has maintain'd you: Now go forth in a lucky hour: Try to follow their Paterns of Loyalty to the King, and Zeal for the publick Intereſt: Try to return to your Benefactors, that kind of Gratitude, which of all others, will be moſt acceptable to them: By endeavouring to put your ſelves into a condition of doing the good

good to others, that has been done to you: By endeavouring the Peace, and Welfare of a Church, to which you owe, not only your ſpiritual, but your Natural Life.

A Church, that excels all its Enemies, on both ſides, as in many other things; ſo eſpecially in the great Doctrine of Charity: In which the Papiſts, on the one ſide, pretend to be moſt triumphant: And I heartily wiſh, too many of the Sectaries, on the other ſide, were not apparently too deficient. But our Church has moſt wiſely, moſt piouſly choſen, and the bleſſed Spirit of God has moſt graciouſly aſſiſted it in the choice of the middle path between both theſe extreams. It gives as much due to Good Works, as is conſiſtent with the Grace of the Goſpel; It gives as much preference to Divine Grace, as is conſiſtent with the Precepts of the Goſpel: Commands us to return to God, and, as to him, to the Poor, his Gifts, out of meer duty and thankfulneſs; not to depoſite them with him, in hopes of meriting by them; requires us to perform all deeds of Charity equally to any others; but not with equally preſumptuous pretenſions.

I ſhall no longer detain this Great Aſſembly: Only I beſeech Almighty God, to direct all your Counſels, and bleſs all your Proceedings in this weighty buſineſs.

Pſ. 122. 8, 9. *For my Brethren, and Companions ſake, I wiſh you Proſperity: Yea, becauſe of the Houſe of the Lord, our God,* what good man will not *ſeek to do you Good*? Will not heartily pray, that for your *Labour of Love* to the diſtreſſed part *of the Houſhold of Faith* here, you may receive an abundant Reward both here, and hereafter? Here in your Eſtates, your Reputations, above all, in your Conſciences, and increaſe of Grace: Hereafter in immortal happineſs: When this *Houſhold of Faith* ſhall be changed into a *Glorious City*, an *Everlaſting Kingdom*; of which I beſeech Almighty God to make us all Partakers. *Amen.*

FINIS.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

AT

WHITE-HALL,

December 22*d.* 1678.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,

Printed for *Charles Brome*, at the *Gun* at the *West End* of St. *Pauls*. 1697.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

AT

WHITE-HALL,

December the 22*d.* 1678.

Gal. iv. Part of the 18*th* ver.

It is good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing.

IN this Chapter, St. *Paul* Expoſtulates with the *Galatians*, That they were ſo much degenerated from the true Spirit of Chriſtian Liberty, as to ſeem deſirous of the Jewiſh Yoke; from which the Precious Blood of Chriſt had ſet the

Jews

Jews free, certainly therefore the *Gentiles*; the Apoſtle himſelf, by his Doctrine, having fully taught them the extent, and uſe of that Freedom.

Of which dangerous Error, he diſcovers the Cauſe in the 17th Verſe. Is it not, ſays he, *that there are crept in among you deceitful Teachers*? Men, who pretend to be as zealous for you, as we the True Miniſters of Chriſt, can be? Yet you ought to judge of them, not by the heat of their Zeal, but by its Effects: *They zealouſly*, ſays he, *affect you, but not well*; For *they would exclude you*, or *us*, as ſome Copies have it: *You* from the True Faith: *Us*, from being True Apoſtles. But Schiſm, and Separation, mens unjuſt Excluding themſelves, or others out of the Church, are always works of a Falſe Zeal, never ſigns of a True. *Wherefore*, ſays he, *beware of them*: Their Zeal is the more to be ſuſpected, for being ſo violent: For tho it *be good to be zealouſly affected always*, yet it ſhould be only *in a good thing*.

My Text, you ſee, conſiſts of Two Parts.

Firſt, A *Juſt Commendation of True, Religious Zeal*: and that in the utmoſt extent

tent of it; *It is good to be zealously, zealously affected always.*

Secondly, The *Due Limitation of such Zeal,* so as it may deserve that Commendation: It should be *in a good thing.*

The Substance of both is, *That True Zeal is a most Excellent Grace: but that the Truth of it is to be esteem'd, not so much by the Heighth of the Passions, of which it is composed, as by the Goodness of the things, about which it is employed.*

In treating of this Doctrine, it will be needful for us to examine,

First, *What is the Name, and Nature, and Causes of True Zeal?* That so we may prove it to be a *good thing, to be zealously affected.*

Secondly, *What are the Bounds, and Extreams, what the Corruptions, and Remedies of Zeal?* That so we may reduce and confine it to its proper work, which is, *to be zealous in a good thing.*

Of these Two Particulars, if now, by the Grace of God, we shall make a right Use, and Improvement; The One will excite in us the most sincere, most ardent Affections towards God, and the Things of

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of God; The Other will direct us in the right managing, and applying of those Affections: Which Two are indeed the great Design of all True Religion. This is the Sum of all the Laws of Christ, and his Apostles; That as we should most carefully endeavour to know all our Duties towards God, and Man; so we should perform them all, with that unfeigned Integrity, which belongs to Christian Piety; with that Temper and Sobriety, which becomes Christian Prudence, and Charity; with that Warmth and Affection, which agrees with Christian Zeal: That is, in other words, We should be *zealously affected always*, but only *in good things*.

The word *Zeal*, amongst Ancient Heathen Writers, is us'd indifferently in a good, or a bad Sense; but seldom, or never in a Religious Sense. At best it is taken by them to express a man's earnest Desire, and eager Pursuit of some Temporal Good, and a Grief that others possess that Good, which he wants; especially those who are his Equals in other Things. Very frequently with them it signifies Emulation, and that sort of it which is commonly accompanied with Envy and immoderate Contention. And indeed

indeed it were much to be wiſh'd, that in the *Chriſtian Church*, which has advanc'd the word *Zeal*, and apply'd it to a Divine meaning, there had not been, in all Ages, too many *Chriſtians*, who have been Zealous rather according to the *Heathen* ſignification of the word, than the *Chriſtian*.

In the Scripture, and amongſt *Chriſtian Writers*, when it is uſed in the beſt Senſe, for what it ſhould be, not what it too generally is, it then paſſes for a vehement Affection, a reſtleſs Heat, a powerful Inclination of the Mind, towards Heaven, and Heavenly Things; chiefly regarding the Divine Author of them, and his Glory; and next Himſelf, *his Truths*, *his Ways*, *his Rewards*: when with earneſt, but harmleſs Paſſions, we wiſh, we contrive, we contend for the Honour of God, the Belief, the Spreading of his Doctrines, the Practice of his Laws, the Flouriſhing of his Religion, the enjoying of his Promiſes, the Peace, and Proſperity of his Church: and when moſt conſtantly, moſt irreconcilably we hate, and oppoſe the things, that are contrary to any of theſe.

So that true *Zeal* ſeems not to be any one ſingle Affection of the Soul; as are the

the other *Paſſions*, of Love, Deſire, Hope, Joy, Grief, Hatred, and the like; but rather it is a ſtrong Mixture of many holy and ſpiritual Affections: rather a *gracious Conſtitution of the whole Mind*, than any *one particular Grace*: affecting the whole Will, Swaying all the Thoughts of a Devout Heart, and filling it with all manner of *Pious Intentions*: all not only uncounterfeit, but moſt Fervent. It is an Addition of a Double Meaſure and Force, and Activity to that Religion, which was before Sincere. It is to a ſpiritual Life, as Health is to a natural; renders that which elſe would *only breathe*, *and move*, not *only living*, but *moſt lively*, and *moſt vigorous*. And as in *Moral Vertue*, there is ſome more perfect Degree; that the *Heathen Moraliſts* call'd *Heroick*, and even Divine Vertue; which is not it ſelf a diſtinct Vertue, but the Higheſt Pitch, and Eminence of all other Virtues; and which, they therefore thought. did make men moſt nearly to approach the *Nature of God*: So True Zeal may be ſtiled the *Heroick*, and *moſt Divine Degree of all true Piety*.

Such is the Name; Such, I humbly conceive, is, and ought to be, the Nature

ture of True Zeal: And by this we may gueſs at the Uſefullneſs of it. The Uſefulneſs do I ſay? Why not rather the Neceſſity? In all *Chriſtians*, ſome kind of Zeal for the Intereſt, and Practice of the True Religion, is not only moſt beneficial, but moſt neceſſary, moſt inſeparable from its Reality.

This will appear to be certain, if we reflect on the Cauſes, that are able, and are wont to raiſe Zeal in Mens Hearts. Zeal being the top, and perfection of ſo many Religious Affections for ſome things, againſt others: The Cauſes therefore of it muſt needs be moſt eminent, moſt efficacious in both kinds. Theſe are Good, or Evil; both in the higheſt Degree, both in a double Reſpect: Either the great, and admirable Goodneſs of a thing in it ſelf; or its extraordinary Goodneſs, and Agreeableneſs to us: And either the exceeding Evil of a thing in its own Nature, or its Hurtfulneſs, and Miſchievouſneſs to us.

So lovely, ſo graceful is all Goodneſs in it ſelf, that it can ſcarce be obſerved by any Man, in its native Beauty, without ſome Emotion in his mind to Love, and obtain it. Some ſecret Charms it has, that are wont to prevail, not only always on its

its Friends, but often on its very Enemies. There is no queſtion, but many wicked Men are often touch'd with ſome inward Reverence for that Goodneſs, which they cannot be perſwaded to practiſe, nay, which they outwardly ſeem to deſpiſe.

Such is the attractive Force of it, in its general Contemplation. But more, when a thing that is infinitely good in it Self, infinitely better in Nature, greater in Power than we are, ſhall freely deſcend down to us, ſhall condeſcend to have the neareſt relation to us, ſhall appear to employ all its high Perfections cheifly for our Happineſs, nay, ſhall, for that end only, take on it ſelf our Imperfections: What Goodneſs can be more Amiable in general? What more Obliging, more Tender in particular than this? What ought to produce in us more inflam'd Affections, and Zeal for it?

The like may be ſaid on the other ſide. Whatever is Evil, and Wicked in it ſelf, it is Imperfect, Uncomely, Deteſtable, even in the Judgment of Nature, of Reaſon, of Senſe it ſelf: And therefore it cannot but raiſe, in the unprejudic'd Beholders, a general Averſion from it. But more, if the ſame thing ſhall appear to

be peculiarly Evil, or Injurious, or Pernicious to us: That general Averſion will be, and ought to be turn'd into a particular Hatred, and Zeal againſt it.

And now is there not an entire Concurrence of this double Goodneſs in the ways of Religion? Of this double Evil in all things, that are at Enmity with it? Is not Religion ſo perfectly good in ſelf, its Doctrines, its Commands, its Recompences; above all, in its Author; that, without the groſſeſt Senſuality, we cannot but admire it? Will it not be ſo good, and beneficial to us, if we believe, and practice it, that, without the moſt *heinous Ingratitude* we cannot but be moſt *zealouſly affected* towards it?

On the contrary, is not Sin, notwithſtanding all the moſt flattering colours, and moſt alluring Shapes, it can put on, when it ſtrives to beguile our weak Senſens; notwithſtanding all the moſt ſpecious Diſguiſes, which the Devil, the Father of all Hypocriſy, can beſtow upon it; yet is not Sin in its own Nature, moſt Deficient, moſt Vile, moſt Deformed? Is it not moſt Pernicious, to our Nature? Moſt Injurious to our true Intereſt? Moſt Deſtructive of our Happineſs? Are not the moſt Wicked Men compell'd to confeſs all this; ſometimes in their Proſperi-

ty, often in their Adverſity? ſometimes with their Tongues, often in their Fears, well nigh always in their Conſcience? All this is ſo perſpicuous, ſo undeniable, that, in a Congregation of Chriſtians, I need not be over-induſtrious in the *proof* of it.

Theſe then being the perpetual Cauſes of Zeal; the greateſt Good, or the Greateſt Evil; either abſolutely ſo in themſelves, or relatively ſo to us; and both Kinds of the *Good* unqueſtionably meeting in Religion; both Kinds of the *Evil* in its Oppoſites: it is therefore *good to be zealouſly affected* for the one, againſt the other: *to be always zealouſly affected:* For the ſame Motives of Zeal continuing in the things themſelves unchangeable, as they do, and will for ever; for ever all *Goodneſs* will be moſt charming, for ever all *Wickedneſs* will be moſt Odious; the Affections therefore, the flaming Love which the one, the vehement Hatred which the other, that is, the Zeal, which they both ſhould ſtir up in our Minds, ought alſo to be for ever unchangeable.

Thus far we walk on firm, and even ground: Thus it is *good to be always zealouſly affected.* But now begins to appear the Difficulty, and the Danger. For Zeal

Zeal being compos'd, as you have heard, of the higheſt Degrees of ſo many Affections, the true Zeal conſiſting of the greateſt Lawful Degrees, the falſe of the greateſt unlawful Degrees of thoſe Affections: the right tempering and moderating of all ſuch Affections, and all their Degrees, in themſelves ſo ſtrong, in their Objects ſo different, muſt needs be a very hard, and a very hazardous Work. So it is in any one of all *our Natural Paſſions*. *Paſſion* is the great Mover, and Spring of the Soul: When Mens Paſſions are ſtrongeſt, they may have great, and Noble Effects; but they are then alſo moſt apt to fall into the greateſt Miſcarriages. And are not our moſt ſpiritual Affections as liable to the like *Corruptions*? They are in truth, more liable: ſo much the more, in that mens ſpiritual Failings are harder to be repented of, or acknowledg'd for ſins, than their natural Faults, or carnal Vices are.

Moſt certainly the ſtricteſt Profeſſion of Piety, the ſevereſt Appearance of Devotion, the moſt extraordinary Fervour of Zeal is moſt praiſe-worthy, moſt Chriſtian, if undiſſembled, if humbly practis'd: But it is not always moſt free from *Diſſimulation*, or *Spiritual Pride*.

And if the greateſt outward Shew of Zeal for Religion, be put on by Hypocriſy, If the greateſt inward heat of it be not ſweetned by *Meekneſs*, or not tempered with *Humility*, or not govern'd by Prudence; can it do God any Service? rather it diſhonours him: can it bring to our own Souls any Benefit? rather it miſchiefs them.

Wherefore it is Prudence, Humility, Gentleneſs; things that, at firſt ſight, ſeem moſt inconſiſtent with all Zeal, that are the great Security, the beſt Guards, the Chief Ornaments of all the moſt Godly Zeal. It is *Mediocrity*, *Decence*, *Integrity*, *Charity*, that are the Great Rules, the Standards of Goodneſs, of Excellence, not only in all Humane Converſation, not only in all Moral Virtue, but even in all our moſt Religious Duties.

Are not all, or moſt Evangelical Virtues, and Graces, in danger of Extremes? As there is, God knows, too often a Defect on the one ſide, ſo there may be an Exceſs on the other. May not Hope in God, or Godly Sorrow, be perverted into Preſumption, or Deſpair? May not Faith in God be depraved by Infidelity, or by Superſtition? Men may believe too little; they may believe too much

much. May not the Worſhip of God be corrupted by Prophaneſs, or by Idolatry? It may be too Naked for want of Ceremonies; it may be too pompous by an Exceſs of them. Thus the reſt. Thus *Religious Zeal* is ſubject to an Exceſs, and to a Defect: either when ſomething is mingled with it, which it ſhould not have; or when it Wants ſomething that ought to go along with it. The Defect of it is *Lukewarmneſs*, or *Coldneſs in Religion*; the Exceſs is *Inordinate Heat*, and *Spiritual Fury*. It is very natural for Men, very eaſie for Chriſtians to offend in one of theſe: Moſt natural for all ſenſual Men to fall into the Defect; very eaſie for many well-meaning Chriſtians to run themſelves, for ill-meaning Hypocrites to thruſt others into the Exceſs of it. And it is the Chief Employment, the beſt Fruit of that *Wiſdom, which teacheth Men to be wiſe to Salvation*, to find out, and to follow the *ſober, temperate, middle Way between them both.*

Be pleas'd then, to this purpoſe, that we proceed to the *Second Head* of my Diſcourſe; to examine, *What are the due Degrees, and undue Extremes? What the Juſt Limits, and Ill Excurſions of Zeal?*

And that we first begin with *the Excess* of it.

This indeed is a Subject, of which it is hard to speak without Satyrical Sharpness, and particular Reflections on many Persons, and Societies, and even Churches of Christians: so ill have been the Designs, so lamentable the Effects of intemperate Zeal in all Christendom, especially in our own Time, and Countrey. Yet let us try to consider this Tender Argument, so, as not our selves to fall into an Extravagance of Zeal, whilst we condemn such Excesses. So the Meekness of Christianity Teaches all Christians, to deal with *Erroneously-zealous Christians*; to pity, not revile, the Persons, whilst we reprove their Errors: To convince their *Contentious and Outragious Zeal*, by *the most Religious*, and in truth, *the most Powerful Confutation of a milder Practice*, and *more charitable Examples*.

The great Sign then, and Character, in my Text, to distinguish the True Zeal from the False, is *Goodness*: Either the Goodness of the Zeal it self; or the Goodness of the things about which it is concern'd: the latter being here made a Proof of the former. But besides, the Goodness of the Zeal it self may

may be diſcern'd; either by the Light, which directs it in the Head; or by the Work of it in the Heart. And ſo we may ſafely conclude, that to be the only True Zeal.

Firſt, That which is guided by a good Light in the Head.

Secondly, That which conſiſts of good and innocent Affections in the Heart.

Thirdly, That which employs the Head, and the Heart about good things, and thoſe only.

Firſt, we are to inquire, what is the beſt Guide, and Conductor of Zeal in the Head? For that we may conſult our Apoſtle in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, *Brethren*, ſays he, *My Hearts deſire, and Prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they may be ſaved: For I bear them Record that they have a Zeal for God, but not according to Knowledge.* Rom. 10. 1. 2.

In which words two things are obſervable: The Apoſtles Behaviour towards his Brethren in the Fleſh, the Iſraelites, who were miſtaken in their Zeal for God: And his Diſcovery of the ground of that Miſtake. His behaviour is not to cenſure bitterly the Errors of their Zeal; but rather to bear witneſs to the good Intentions of that Zeal, which they had; and to pray heartily to God, that he would direct

their ill apply'd Affections, by a true, Heavenly, and Spiritual Light.

Such was his mild, and gentle Behaviour, tho zealous too, for the Cauſe of Chriſt, towards the miſguided Iſraelites. His Diſcovery of the Error of their Zeal, and his reproof of it follows, It is, that it was *not according to Knowledge.*

And as his Behaviour ought to be an Example for our Practiſe in the like Caſes; ſo his Reproof may afford us the Firſt moſt certain Rule to inſtruct our Judgments, in the correcting of the erroneous, and directing of the true Zeal.

Behold, I beſeech you. That, in Saint *Pauls* Opinion, is imperfect, or falſe Zeal, which is only Hot, and Eager without Knowledge: That is the right Zeal, which is not only ſincere, and in earneſt, but *according to Knowledge*?

According to Knowledge: Another manner of Companion of Zeal, than what too commonly goes along with it. Are not thoſe Men too often found to be the greateſt, and do they not think themſelves to be the trueſt Zealots, who are moſt notoriouſly Ignorant? Who make it their Buſineſs, their Pride, to expreſs their blind Zeal, not only without all Knowledge, but oftentimes againſt all?

Whereas

Whereas true Zeal ſhould always begin with true Knowledge firſt; and thence proceed to an unwearied Paſſion, for what it once knows to be worthy of ſuch Paſſion: Falſe Zeal always begins with Paſſion firſt, and there uſually ends; ſeldom, or never goes farther, than ignorant, and violent Paſſion.

Our Zeal then ſhould be *according to Knowledge*. And what Kind of Knowledge? Without all queſtion, Firſt according to the true, ſaving, Evangelical Knowledge.

It ſhould be according to the Goſpel; the whole Goſpel: Not only according to its Truths, but Precepts: Not only according to its free Grace, but neceſſary Duties: Not only according to its Miſteries, but alſo its Commandments. It ſhould be according to the Original Deſign, Fundamental Principles, and Eternal End of the Goſpel: Not ſo, as to ſet any one Doctrine, or Work of it at variance with others; which are all admirably conſiſtent amongſt themſelves, and agree in a Bleſſed Harmony: Not ſo, as only to contend for ſome temporary Opinions, or factious falſe Inferences from the Goſpel; which rather ſerve to uphold the Credit, and ſecular Intereſt of Religious

gious Sects, than for the Honour of Religion it ſelf.

Thus ſhould our Zeal be according to the Goſpel, That Knowledge, which deſcends from above. But then beſides, 'twill do well, if it be alſo accompanied with ſome good, and grave Degree of Civil Wiſdom, and Underſtanding, of ſober Knowledge even of this World, and worldly things. For tho all that profeſs the Name of Chriſt, are cheifly in his Religion to be directed by a true ſpiritual Light: Yet ſuch earneſt, and ſtrong Motions of the Mind, as commonly attend Religious Zeal, will receive no manner of hindrance, but rather great Aſſiſtance from the ſubordinate Help, and Faithful Service, and ſteddy Guidance of true Natural Light it ſelf.

True Zeal neither is, nor ought to be a Solitary, Melancholy Grace: As if it were only fit to dwell in mean, dark and narrow Minds; ſuch as are utterly unprovided of all other natural, or moral, or ſpiritual Abilities. No. As there is ſcarce any one Grace, or Gift of God, that ever uſes to go alone: But where any one of them enters, others will go with it, or ſoon follow after it: So eſpecially of all Graces, Zeal ought never to go alone. In

wha

whatever Soul Zeal gets the entire Poſſeſſion, and keeps it ſingly, without the Society of many other Gifts, or to the Shutting out of any one Virtue; there it is a dangerous Gueſt, there it is an Incendiary. But wherever it is leagued, and joyned in Company, with many other ſpiritual Endowments, and Advantages of Nature; with a diſcreet Judgment, a clear Underſtanding, a well-order'd Devotion, an exemplary Charity; there it is the ſureſt Defence, the greateſt Beauty of true Piety; there it gives the brighteſt Luſtre to Religion.

This will appear ſtill more evident in my ſecond Particular; that recommends to us a ſpecial care of rectifying Zeal in the Heart: The Heart, which is the proper Seat of this, as of all other practical Virtues, and Graces: *From the Heart proceed the iſſues of Life*; of a pious, as well as of a Corporeal Life: By the Motions, and Pulſes of the Heart, the Temper of our ſpiritual, as well as bodily State may be judg'd. Prov. 4. 23.

In the Heart Zeal ought to be compoſed of the higheſt Degrees of all pious Affections: Of which ſome in their own Nature are milder, and gentler; ſome ſharper, and more vehement. It ſhould be

be made up, I ſay, of the largeſt Meaſures of Spiritual Love, Deſire, Hope, Hatred, Grief, Indignation, and the like: Some of theſe Affections earneſtly fixing our Minds on God, and Religion; the others forcibly averting from us thoſe things, which are diſpleaſing to God, and contrary to Religion.

Now then, That Zeal, which has the greater Mixture of the more gentle, more benign, more charitable Affections, is moſt likely to be the beſt: That wherein the other more harſh, ſowre, and angry Paſſions have the greater Share, and are Predominant, that is in moſt Danger to be immoderate, and exceſſive: That, in which this latter Kind does exclude the former, that is undoubtedly unlawful, and wicked.

This ſeems to be moſt agreeable to the great Primitive Purpoſe of true Chriſtianity; and it may perhaps be more clearly exemplified in an Inſtance. Our Love of God, his Truths, his Honour; our unquenchable Deſires to promote, our well-grounded Hopes to enjoy his Glory; theſe Affections ſhould certainly take the firſt, and the cheif place in our Zeal: Theſe can never be too much in earneſt: They can never carry out our Hearts beyond due

due Meaſure. Our Hatred of Thoſe Ways, which God hates, our Greif for, and Indignation againſt thoſe things, that diſpleaſe, and diſhonour Him; theſe ſhould have their Turn too in our Minds: Theſe alſo are very acceptable to God Himſelf. But then there ought to be a much ſtricter Guard kept on this ſort of Paſſions; that they do not exceed due Bounds; that they do not precipitate us into Violence, or Strife, or Malice; which are condemn'd by St. *James*, under the Title of πικρὸς ζῆλος, that is, bitter Envying in our Tranſlation; and this kind is reckon'd by St. *Paul*, as one of the moſt Carnal Sins: For amongſt *the works of the Fleſh, which* he ſays *are manifeſt*, he Names *Murders, Drunkenneſs, Witchcrafts, Hatred, Variance, Strife, Emulations, Wrath, Seditions, Hereſies*: Where that word, which we Tranſlate *Emulations*, is in the Original ζῆλοι.

Jam. 3. 14

Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21.

Thus whatever all pretended Zealots may think of the ſublime Purity, and Spirituality of all Zeal; we find ſome Zeal may be in the Company of the groſſeſt, and moſt ſenſual Sins; and, you ſee, from Saint *Paul* it deſerves the Name of Emulations, from Saint *James* the Name of Envy; of which altho *Ariſtotle* allows

And ſo in *Clem. Ep. ad Cor.* often. *Ariſt. Rh. lib.* 2. *c.* 11.

allows that ſome Emulation may be good, and may be found in ſome good Men; yet Envy he utterly condemns as wicked in it ſelf, and only to be found in wicked Minds. And ſuch was that Envy, which moved the high Prieſts, and Sadduces, to raiſe the very firſt Perſecution againſt the Church. When they beheld themſelves ſo much over-match'd by the Glorious Works, and excellent Abilities, and Divine Authority of the Apoſtles, 'tis ſaid ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου; and immediately *they laid their hands on them, and caſt them into Priſon.* They were fill'd with Zeal, or as we read it, with Indignation, or Envy; the uſual Cauſe, and Original of all Sects, and Schiſms, and Hereſies.

Acts 5. 17, 18.

But of that only in paſſing; It is then moſt true, that in their Love of God, and Deſire to pleaſe Him, Men can never be too Affectionate: It is as true, tho it may at firſt ſeem a Paradox, that in their Hatred of Sin, Men may be ſometimes too paſſionate. Our Love of God may, and ſhould provoke us to Love the things of God, yea, and the Perſons, that eſpecially bear the Image of God; to love, and reverence them, as much as we can, the more the better. But our Hatred of Sin may carry us inſenſibly farther than againſt

gainſt the Sin; which we ſhould hate altogether; it may involve the Perſon; which we ſhould not hate at all. For all Hatred of Perſons, by very many Chriſtian Principles, we are moſt ſolemnly, indiſpenſably forbid. So that the more eager, and ſharp Acts of Zeal are not permitted to all Men always to practiſe: But the more Tender, more Chriſtian part of it is always commanded to all. All are not always bound to hate, and puniſh the true Enemies of Religion; much leſs any whom they may fancy to be ſo: All are always obliged to love its true Friends, and to pray for its very Enemies.

That is a ſecond Sign of the true Evangelical Zeal, and Note for the detection of its contrary; it ſhould abound more in the mild, and good-natured Affections, than in the vehement, and wrathful Paſſions. An Obſervation that is the more ſeaſonable to be conſider'd, becauſe it is every where very Notorious, and indeed a deplorable thing in it ſelf; that the Religion, which was intended to reconcile Mankind to Almighty God, whom we had infinitely offended, ſhould not Univerſally have the like Effect in reconciling Mankind amongſt themſelves, between whom

whom there can be no ſuch Offences: That in Religion Men ſhould be generally much more given to that part, which inclines them to Hatred, Anger, and Cenſure of Evil things, than to that, which prefers Brotherly Love, Candor, Good-will, and Kindneſs for Good things. Do not too many believe no Religion to be Pure, but what is intemperately Rigid? No Zeal to be Spiritual but what is Cenſorious, or Vindicative? Whereas no Religion is true, that is not Peaceable, as well as Pure: No Zeal is Spiritual, that is not alſo Charitable, nay, cheifly ſo.

The true Zeal ſhould be in Religion, what true Courage is in humane Nature. None but Minds truely pious are capable of the one: None but Minds truely great, are capable of the other: And they both alike diſpoſe, and qualifie the Hearts, which they inhabit. You well know, that to be the trueſt Courage, which is not only firm, brave, undaunted, but alſo calm, inoffenſive, ſlow to Anger, hard to be provoked, or ſoon reconciled. Give me leave to add, ſo ſhould the true Zeal be; Not only conſtant, daring, fearleſs; but meek, compaſſionate, long-ſuffering, eaſie to be intreated. All other Courage, beſides that, is not true Valour,

but

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Having thus declared, what is to be the Compoſition of Zeal in the Head, and the Heart; of what kind of Knowledge, of what Sort of Affections it ought to conſiſt; I come in the laſt place to declare, what is the true Object of it. For that we need go no farther than to the words of my Text. *It is good to be zealous in a good thing.*

In a Good Thing. I cannot but obſerve Firſt, that it is here only ſaid *a good Thing.* No mention is made of Zeal for Good Perſons. For tho a Zeal for Perſons is lawful, nay, commendable: As Saint *Paul* here commends theſe *Galatians*, that *They would have given him their very Eyes:* Yet in general, a Zeal for Perſons, is far leſs Religious, far more eaſie to be perverted, than a Zeal for things. Indeed ſcarce any thing can be more pernicious to Religion, than when its Intereſt is made a Buſineſs rather of Names than Things. May we not impute to this one Miſtake, a great part of all the moſt dangerous Animoſities, and Schiſms, that have infeſted the Chriſtian Church? Have they not moſt frequently riſen from a Gal. 4. 15.

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Factious Admiration of ſome particular Man, ſome particular Church, ſome Head of a Party, ſome Author of a New Opinion?

A Corruption that began very early, even in the Primitive Age. Does not Saint *Paul* reprehend his Contemporaries, for ſaying, not only I am of Chriſt; but
1 Cor. 1. 12. *I am of* Paul, *I am of* Apollos, *I am of* Cephas? Tho he himſelf was Nam'd one of the Parties, yet the rather, the more warmly he condemns their Partiality: The more he undervalues himſelf, and his excellent Brethren, whoſe Names were abuſed in the like manner with his; who, ſays He, is *Paul?* Who? *Apollos?* Who? They were ſome of the greateſt and moſt eminent Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt both in Dignity, and Abilities. And can it then be thought Zeal to contend for any other Names, when it was Envy, and Strife to ſet up for *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*? And was not this Danger moſt wiſely foreſeen by the Apoſtle? For altho neither the ill uſe of *Paul*, or *Apollos* Name did any conſiderable Hurt, that we know of: Yet the pretence of *Cephas* Name, and abuſe of his Authority, has caus'd the greateſt Rents, and Diviſions, that ever were in the Chriſtian Church:

Church: The Separation of the *Eaſtern* Church from the *Weſtern*, and of the *Weſtern* within it ſelf.

That is one Fatal Error, when Men imprudently, and uncharitably often, ſeditiouſly and mutinouſly ſometimes, employ their Zeal for Perſons. There is another Fault, that is contrary to this, and full as miſchevous, but leſs taken notice of for a Fault; nay, amongſt too many it paſſes for a Sign of a good, and Godly, and publick Spirit. That is, when Men unduely exerciſe their Zeal againſt Perſons; not only againſt evil Perſons; not only againſt ſome good Perſons; but againſt thoſe, who are the moſt venerable, and ſacred.

I would willingly ask any Man, that has but once read the Bible over, whether the whole Tenor of the Divine Law does not poſitively require Humility, and Meekneſs to all Men; a Love for Neighbours, that is, in the Goſpel ſenſe, for all Men too; a due Obſervance of all Degrees of Men; a hearty ſubmiſſion to Teachers; a Conſcientious Subjection to Governors? Whether all theſe Duties be not often moſt Divinely repeated, and inculcated throughout the whole Scripture? Whether if a wiſe, and honeſt Heathen

ſhould impartially ſurvey our Religion, he would not preſently conclude, that the main Practiſes of it which concern this World, ought cheifly to conſiſt in this kind of good Offices? But then I would ask any Man experienc'd in the World, whether the greateſt part of all the pretended Zeal, of all ſides, in our Memories, has not too much in publick, almoſt continually in private, ſpent, and vented it ſelf, either in unchriſtian Cenſure of Neighbours, or Detracting from Superiors, or undervaluing of Teachers, or Slandering of Governors? Slandering? 'Twere well if they ſtopt there. Slander is an innocent thing, in compariſon of thoſe dire attempts, in which a Rage of Zeal has engaged too many Zealots againſt their Governours.

But can that be a Goſpel Zeal, which at leaſt is the worſt of ill Manners; in truth is moſt deſtructive to all Humane Society? A Zeal, which is moſt levelled againſt thoſe very Perſons, of whom the Laws of Nature, and Morality, and Policy, as well as the Goſpel, have commanded men to think with the greateſt Affection; to ſpeak with the greateſt Reverence; to Act for them with moſt dutiful Obedience: Nay, for whom, if

if for any, the Goſpel has taught them to be moſt zealous.

On the whole matter, it is not at all good to be zealous againſt any Perſons; as they are Such; but only againſt their Crimes: It is better to be zealous for Things, than for Perſons. But then it ſhould be only for good things. A Rule, that does certainly exclude all manner of Zeal for ill things; all vehement Zeal for little things. The one can only be the Zeal of a wicked mind: The other only of a light, and vain mind. Indeed thoſe things, in our ſelves, are the only proper Objects of our Zeal, which, in others, are the unqueſtionable Subjects of our Praiſes: And that neither ill things, nor little things can be: The one meriting our Hatred; the other a low eſteem, if not our Contempt. *Phil.* 4. 8.

Of ill things there is no manner of queſtion. But to determine, what are little things in Religion, great warineſs is to be uſed. Many think nothing to be truely great in it, but what concerns Chriſtian Faith: Chriſtian Works they reſpect not ſo much: Chriſtian Diſcipline, or Decence of Worſhip they regard not at all. But we are to go by another Meaſure. Undoubtedly thoſe things are abſolutely little

in Religion, that, neither in particular, nor in general, conduce to the Advancement of Truth, or Holineſs, or Peace, or Order in the Chriſtian Church. Whatever things do really contribute to all theſe Ends, they are abſolutely the greateſt things in Religion. Whatever do promote any one of theſe Ends, tho perhaps not equally all, even theſe are, by no means, to be accounted little things.

Thus the uſe of ſome diſtinct Habit, or Geſture, or Time, or Place may ſeem of no great Concernment in Chriſtian Doctrine: But it is of great Concernment in Chriſtian Devotion, and Diſcipline. Thus any one particular Decence, in Divine Service, may ſeem to ſome no great thing. But Decence in general is a great thing: And that muſt be exercis'd in ſome Particulars, or other; or it is nothing but an empty Name. Thus any one Ceremony may be eſteemed a ſmall thing, before it is Commanded: Yet it cannot be ſo afterwards. For Obedience is a great thing; the Neglect of all Ceremony introduces great Diſorder; and for men to withdraw from a true Church, on the diſlike of a few Ceremonies only, deſtroys all Poſſibility of Communion.

Where-

Wherefore not only matters of belief, but of Diſcipline, of Order, of Communion, are all, in their ſeveral Ranks, things of great Moment; they are good things; and ſo all of them may be in their Proportion, the proper objects of an honeſt *Zeal*. Still I ſay in their proportion: For as nothing but goodneſs can make *Zeal* to be profitable, nothing but goodneſs can make it not to be dangerous. ſo in all things of Religion, there being a Gradual Goodneſs, there may be alſo different Degrees of *Zeal*.

The Firſt, and principal ſhare belongs to the good Truths of neceſſary Knowledge; or that immediately conduce to Practice: Then to the indiſpenſible Rules of Practice and Diſcipline; then to the good things of Order and Decence. The Diſtinction between all theſe and the reaſon of it is manifeſt. For the goodneſs of all Opinions and Ceremonies is to be examin'd not by themſelves, or by their own Light, but only by the goodneſs of the Works, which attend their Belief and Performance; whereas all neceſſary Truths, and good Works are unalterably, eternally good in themſelves. Of good Works our Apoſtle tells us, that it was the great end of our Saviour's giving himſelf

for us, *that he might free us from all Iniquity, and redeem us to himself a peculiar People*; and a *zealous People* too: zealous of what? not only of some good Party, some good Doctrine, some good Article of Faith, but

Tit. 2. 14. *Zealous of good Works.*

Of good Works there are chiefly two sorts, that deserve to be the Objects of Zeal. Either such as are common to all Christians; and ought to be perform'd by all, in the general Course of a Christian Life; by the general obligation of our Christian Profession: or else such as are not common to all, but proper to some Persons, and Callings, and Conditions of Men: As are the peculiar Duties of Princes, Magistrates, Judges, Ministers, and the like, according to their several Stations in this World.

Here then will be found the great difference: This is the great Touchstone of Zeal. Certainly all Men truly Zealous, will most industriously endeavour to perform the first kind of good Works always; those I mean, that are incumbent on all Christians. And they will as Piously apply themselves to the second kind of good Works; if any of them come to be their own just Duties; but not else. They will always strive to be good, devout,

vout, juſt, bountiful, merciful Chriſtians: But they will never think it to be a part of Religion, to ruſh into the Office of Princes or Magiſtrates, or Judges, or Miniſters, or to undertake any of them; nay, they will think it their Duty to forbear them; unleſs they be their own lawful Offices; lawful by the Laws of God and Man.

Whereas Irregular Zeal is, in nothing, more Irregular than in this Does it not too commonly hurry private Men beyond their own Buſineſs, and Callings, and make them unſeaſonably, unjuſtly to invade the Buſineſs and Callings of other Men? In ſtudying to be Quiet, and to do their own Buſineſs, in purifying their own Hearts, in amending their own Lives, in ſubduing their own Luſts, how few Zealots of all Parties employ their Zeal? How hot, how forward, how reſtleſs are they in exclaiming againſt Publick Sins, in crying aloud for the Puniſhment of National Wickedneſs? How much does ſome Men's Zeal converſe abroad, and without doors? How little at home, and within? How many does it urge and inflame rather to do Juſtice on ſome Sins, than to forbear all Sin? How many rather to be Correctors, than Practiſers of Religion?

Of

Of this kind of Pragmatical Zeal, when private Men uſurp an Authority that belongs not to them; in ſhew of puniſhing Sinners, and aſſerting the Cauſe of the Church, and Vindicating the Glory of God; there was a terrible Inſtance amongſt the *Jews*: ſo terrible, that after it, one might well have hoped there would have bin no more like it. Though it be very commonly known, yet I cannot but mention it, at this time eſpecially; becauſe it did equal, if not exceed all the Modern Tranſports of enraged Zeal: indeed it ſeems to have been the fatal Original of them all.

For on a pretence of Imitating ſome extraordinary Caſes in the Old Teſtament; when ſome men were ſometimes immediately Commiſſioned from God, or from *Moſes*, to do extraordinary Actions of *Zeal*, there roſe amongſt the *Jews* a *Sect*, that called themſelves *Zealots*; a Sect moſt cruel and bloody; pretending to be impower'd by a ſecret Impulſe from above, to be the extraordinary Inſtruments of God's Judgments; for the Adminiſtration of which, God himſelf had then otherwiſe provided in an ordinary Courſe: But under that Diſguiſe, they committed all manner of Riots, and Rapines, and Murders: By their

their mad Defence of their own Temple, they deſtroyed it; by their inteſtine Confuſions and Diviſions, they contributed almoſt as much as their Enemies Arms to the enſlaving of their Country: and it is apparent that next to the Divine Vengeance on that People, for the Death of our Saviour, the *Zeal* of that Sect was one of the principal Cauſes of the Ruine of their City and Nation.

From which dreadful Example, what are we inſtructed? Certainly, that the *Zeal* of private Men has no manner of allowance from God to take Pattern from extraordinary Caſes to exceed the ordinary Duties of Chriſtianity; or to divert any of them out of their uſual Channel: that no Holy Paſſion, no Illumination, no Inſpiration can now be a ſufficient Commiſſion to warrant thoſe Attempts, which contradict the common Rules of Peace, Juſtice, Obedience and Charity: that nothing can ever Authorize ſuch Attempts, but only a Divine, Immediate, Miraculous Call from Heaven, and that confirmed by Miraculous Works too; which it is a great queſtion, whether there be any ſuch at all in theſe Ages of the World; or rather, I think no queſtion, but that there is none ſuch at all: that the executive part of *Zeal* belongs

belongs only to Publick Juſtice, not to any private Men; whatever Shew they may make of a ſtricter Communion with God, or a more diſtinguiſhing and ſeparate way of Holineſs: which, the more remarkably diſtinguiſhing and ſeparating it is, the more we always ought to ſuſpect that it is Hypocritical: In ſhort, that altho' God does ſometimes make uſe of Furious *Zeal*, as one of his greateſt Scourges on a Sinful People; yet, to our Comfort, at laſt it always ends in the Deſtruction of the *Zealots* themſelves. Sometimes whole Nations may periſh by the *Zeal* of a few; ſometimes the Nation may eſcape, but the *Zealots* never.

I intreat your Patience, whilſt I mention another Example, recorded in the Scripture, of another manner of Zeal, perform'd by our Saviour Himſelf, when, with irreſiſtible Majeſty, and Authority, he removed the Exchange, aod drove the Mercat out of the Temple. From which excellent Pattern, what may we learn? what ſhould any Chriſtian practiſe like it? what not? By our Saviour's doing that Act of Piety, with ſuch eminent Signs of Love for the Beauty and Purity of God's Worſhip; with ſuch Divine Indignation againſt thoſe that prophaned it;

it; and with an Extaſie ſo different from the mildneſs of his ordinary Behaviour; that his Diſciples did upon the very place remember, and apply to him that of the *Pſalms*, which was prophecyed of him ſo long before, *The Zeal of thy Houſe has eaten me up*: By this certainly we are taught, that if ever a Chriſtian *Zeal* may be lawfully tranſported beyond its uſual Bounds, it ſhould be for the Purifying of the Houſe of God; firſt, for the Reallity, then for the comelineſs of Religion; never for deſtroying it by Sacrilege, or Defiling it by Rudeneſs or Indecence. *Pſal.* 69. 9.

But of this Practice of our Saviour, what ſhould every Man not follow? Muſt every Chriſtian of whatever ordinary condition take on him, as Chriſt himſelf here did, to vindicate in publick the Glory of God, and his Church, when he thinks his Cauſe is neglected, or his Worſhip unreformed? I ſay not ſo. Every man is not obliged, no man is, on his own Call, or his own Imagination of a Call from God, to have recourſe to open Force, even in the moſt righteous Cauſe. The doing ſo makes his part in it to be moſt unrighteous: The doing ſo will make him moſt unlike our Saviours Example, and moſt diſobedient to his Precepts, whom he makes

makes the greateſt ſhew to imitate and obey.

How far then may any private Chriſtian go to expreſs his *Zealous Affection*, for the Reformation of God's Worſhip? Thus far without queſtion. Whatever oppoſition he can make to Sacrilege and Impiety, by his Wiſhes, his Studies, his Prayers to God: whatever diſgrace he can put on ſuch Sins, in his own Sphere: whatever amendment he can make in thoſe, that commit them by ſerious Intreaties, or ſeaſonable Reproofs, or juſt Complaints to both their Superiors; but cheifly, by his own Practiſe of a more uniform, orderly and devout Piety: All this He may, he ſhould perform: And if this were done, as it ought, it would perhaps be a ſufficient Task for the beſt, the moſt *Zealous* private Chriſtians in the World.

But the reſt is intruſted from God, and therefore ought to be left by men, by the beſt men, by the greateſt Saints, to the Lawful, Publick Authority in Church, and State; In whom that Zeal becomes a Soveraign Virtue, which if unduely practiſed by Private men, were Raſhneſs, or Preſumption, or worſe. Eſpecially it is a moſt Chriſtian Grace, when it is ſeaſonably

bly exerciſed by Chriſtian Princes: Thoſe Powers, that are of God, for the Benefit of men; and over men, for the Honour of God: One of whoſe moſt Sacred Obligations, one of their higheſt Prerogatives, one of their greateſt Praiſes it is to be the Maintainers, and Cheriſhers of a Regular Devotion, a Reverend Worſhip, a true, a decent Piety; which, whenever it loſes its decence, will ſoon after loſe its Reverence, and its Truth. But as long as Religion is Protected, by the ſupreme Power, in its Decence, as well as Truth, ſo long it will make an abundant Return for the Protection it receives; it will be an invincible Support to the Supreme Power it ſelf.

Thus far we have conſidered one Corruption of Religious Zeal, that, which trangreſſes in unbridled Exceſs: And ſome of the moſt effectual Cures, for its Diſtempers, have been propoſed out of the Word of God: Which, you perceive, inſtead of a blind Zeal, only approves a Zeal according to Knowledge; inſtead of a wicked Zeal, a Zeal for good things; inſtead of the *Jewiſh Zealots*, recommends to us the moſt Gracious Example of the great Founder of Chriſtianity.

Theſe

Theſe are ſome, tho I cannot ſay all, nor the greateſt part, of the moſt common Diſeaſes, and neceſſary Remedies of Exceſſive Zeal. For that, when it gets looſe, and grows intemperate, is wont to violate ſo many, almoſt all, not only Spiritual Graces, but even Moral Virtues, and Dictates of Nature; that the Medicines for it, being to be fetch'd from ſo many, not only Spiritual Graces, but even Moral Precepts, and Natural Laws; it is impoſſible to bring them all within the Compaſs of a Sermon.

I now could moſt heartily wiſh, that I had nothing to ſay on the other ſide: That there were not another Extream of Zeal ſtill left behind untouch'd: Which offends as much in the Defect, as the other does in the Exceſs. But it muſt be confeſſed, that Irreligion, Indifference, Careleſsneſs in Religion, are as much ſhort of true Zeal; as unruly Paſſion, and furious Contention in Spiritual things, does exceed the true Bounds of a ſober Zeal.

A Caution, that is moſt carefully to be regarded by all Chriſtians, and cheifly by us of this Age. For it is generally found by ſad Experience, that both theſe Extreams of Zeal; the Exceſs, the Defect; are wont either to meet together in the ſame

ſame times, and places, or immediately to ſucceed one another, and often in the minds of the very ſame Men. Alas! too ſeldom, in Religious matters, do men ſtrive to correct any one Error of Belief, or Practiſe, with the moderate Truth, or Practiſe: Too often they oppoſe it with another Error, as bad, or worſe. Does not Looſeneſs of Life, and a want of neceſſary Sobriety in ſome men, too frequently drive others into Rigors, that are unneceſſary? Does not the freſh, and preſent Abhorrence of inordinate Zeal, and its Effects, too often incline too many, to think the worſe of all Religion?

What then remains to be moſt Seriouſly wiſh'd for, and adviſed? But that we ſtudiouſly provide againſt both theſe Dangers alike? Alike againſt the Fury of Zeal, and againſt the Scandal of Prophaneſs: But not by the aſſiſtance of either of them againſt the other? That we try to ſuppreſs all Licentiouſneſs of Life, and Manners, not by Enthuſiaſm, not by Superſtition, but by a ſober, unaffected, reaſonable, that is, by a true Chriſtian Piety.

We have felt, and ſtill do fear the ſad Influence of a Fiery, Fierce Religion, on all ſides of us: Here from an Enthuſiaſti-

cal, Private Spirit; there from a pretended Catholick Spirit; but private too. Yet God forbid that either of theſe Diſgraces of Religion ſhould be alledged as an Excuſe, or made an Argument, of carrying any man too far on the contrary, to profeſſed Irreligion. We have heard, and known the Name of Holineſs abuſed to the moſt Deſtructive deſigns: Yet God forbid, that the thing it ſelf ſhould be therefore deſtroy'd, on a Pretence of its own Vindication. We, of all Nations under Heaven, have juſt Reaſon to abhor all falſly-inſpired Principles of Godlineſs: But God forbid we ſhould oppoſe them with ungodly, Atheiſtical Practiſes; which will in truth rather ſtrengthen the other, and give them more Authority. Our Church, and State have been often well nigh oppreſs'd by the violent Effects of a Deluding Spirit, and Religious Hypocriſy. And how is that to be prevented for the future? Certainly not by open Impiety: In which there is no Diſguiſe, no Hypocriſy; tho perhaps 'twere better, and more modeſt, if there were. But theſe, and all other ſuch Spiritual deluſions are beſt, are only to be reformed by the Genuine Fruits of a ſincere Religion, a Conformable devotion, and the well

temper'd

temper'd Zeal of the true Christian Spirit.

Of all the Principles of humane Actions, Conscience and Zeal are the most Powerful. Even the false Zeal is a stronger Principle of Acting, and Suffering, than any other, but the true: Unquestionably the true Zeal is the strongest of all other, far beyond all Bodily Strength, or Natural Courage, or Exactness of Discipline, or even Honour it self.

Wherefore seeing we are to contend against the Violence of false Zeal, and the Obstinacy of Seduced Conscience in so many several Shapes: May we furnish our selves with that Defence, that Assistance, which only is more powerful than those are. With true Conscience may our Affections be most firmly United towards the Government: With true Zeal may our Hearts be most ardently inflamed to our Religion. Let us once be truely zealous towards God, and we shall soon infallibly be United within our selves. For true Zeal in Religion is of all things the best means of Union: It is, of all things, the most irresistible Enemy, the surest Friend.

Too long has this most Heavenly Grace, this Beauty of Holiness, this Bright, this

Noon-day Glory of all Virtue, this Spirit, this Life of the Life of true Religion; for ſo all Zeal ſhould be, ſo all true Zeal is: Too long has this been captivated in our Enemies Tents, of both Parties; too long by them has it been Counterfeited, by the Jeſuits, by the Schiſmaticks; too long by them have the falſe Shews, and Images of it been employed, for the moſt miſcheivous Ends; for the Confuſion of Conſciences, of Churches, of Kingdoms; for the Subverſion of Religion, of Governors, of Government; for Ends too Horrid, to be here, or any where, particularly mentioned.

At length, let us of this Church; the beſt Church in the Chriſtian World; and it would be the moſt flouriſhing Church too; if all the Members of it had a Zeal for it, proportionable to its Goodneſs; at length let us rowze up our ſelves to reſcue this captivated Zeal, to reſtore it to its own juſt Liberty; to its own true, truely Chriſtian, truely Primitive Chriſtian Works.

From all ſuch Antichriſtian Raptures of Zeal; which we too often hear of, in theſe Laſt, and Worſt Ages of the World; let us withdraw our Thoughts, and lift up our Minds to the Imitation of the

the moſt Chriſtian Examples of it, as of our Saviour Himſelf, ſo of his Apoſtles, and Diſciples, in the firſt, and therefore the beſt Ages.

When God firſt touched their Hearts with this Coal from the Altar; firſt kindled this Holy Fire of Zeal in their Breaſts; what was the Sign of it? Not a dark, ſmothering, hot, offenſive, uncomfortable Smoak, but a pure, clear, propitious Flame. What were the Effects of that Flame? How were they Zealous? How within themſelves? Not only in unmoveable Faith towards God; but in *Shewing their Faith by their Works*. How were they Zealous for the Church of God? *Not concerning Zeal, perſecuting the Church*; not in making little Differences between Particular Churches; not in Striving for a groundleſs Dominion of one Church over all the reſt: But for the Welfare, and Happineſs of the whole Catholick Church of Chriſt. How were they Zealous for the Glory of God? Not by Violence, or Malice, or Revenge againſt any; not even againſt their Oppreſſors: But only by their own Labours, and Prayers, and Patience, and Magnanimity in Suffering. How were they Zealous in Reſpect to their Temporal Governours? Not to reſiſt Jam. 2. 18. Phil. 3. 6.

Rom. 13. 5. *for Conſcience ſake*, but rather *to be ſubject*, for that very Reaſon: Not by open Rebellion, not by private Machinations; but in Bleſſing, and Serving, and Submitting to their Emperors, tho they were Idolaters; and obeying them, in all things, except their Idolatry.

And can any Man poſſibly doubt, but the ſame meek, humble, and peaceable Zeal is enough for the moſt perfect Chriſtians of this Age; which was ſufficient for the Primitive Chriſtians? Whom to imitate is our Duty; but for us to think to excel them were the greateſt Preſumption. Can it be imagin'd, but the ſame Zeal with which they ſo earneſtly preſt the Duty of Obedience to Princes, who were Mortal Enemies to the Faith; the ſame, we ought to ſhew for the Faith it ſelf: And the true Defenders of it? Can it be reaſonably queſtioned, but the ſame way which they took to begin the Goſpel, and to found the Church of Chriſt, is ſtill the beſt way to continue it, where it is begun, and to make it flouriſh, where it is eſtabliſhed?

So therefore are we to Temper, ſo to Employ our Zeal as they did theirs: To Temper it, I can never repeat this too often, to Temper it, with Innocence, and Benig-

Benignity, and Charity; to Employ it againſt Sin, and Diſobedience, and Schiſm; in unfeigned Piety towards God, in Unſhaken Duty to his Vicegerent, in Hearty Obedience to his Church.

Moſt ſurely theſe are good things, the beſt things in this World, and the next. Wherefore it is good, for us to be always Zealouſly affected towards them. And if we be ſo, we need not fear, but God Almighty will ſtill Preſerve them, and Proſper us in their preſervation: Which God of his infinite Mercies grant. *Amen.*

FINIS.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

Lord Mayor,

AND THE

Court of ALDERMEN,

AT

GUILD-HALL Chappel,

On *January* 29. $168\frac{1}{2}$.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,
Printed for *Charles Brome*, at the *Gun* at the *West End* of St. *Pauls*. 1697.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
S^R. John Moore, Kt.
Lord Mayor of the City of *London*.
And to the
Right Worſhipful the ALDERMEN His Brethren.

My Lord,

THO *the Favour of your Commands is an abundant Excuſe for my Printing this very plain Sermon; yet, I doubt, I need ſome Apology for Preaching it in ſuch an* Auditory, *as I had the Honour that day to ſerve. I fear it might ſeem a* Preſumption *for me to diſcourſe on this Subject, in the preſence of the* Reverend Judges of the Land, *the* Learned Serjeants of the Law, *and the* Wiſe Governours of your Great and Honourable City: *An Aſſembly of Men, from whoſe Wiſdom and Experience ſuch as I might better learn the Doctrine, and Practice of* Righteouſneſs and Mercy. *I*

I can only ſay, that as it was my Duty, ſo it was my Endeavour to treat of this Argument meerly as a Divine. I deſign'd not to perſuade you to theſe Virtues *by the Principles of Humane Prudence; which ſuch a Congregation could not be ſuppos'd to want; but rather to confirm you in them by the Obligations and Promiſes of our Holy Religion; which is the* proper buſineſs of my Profeſſion.

It was therefore enough for me, in that place, on that Text, to perform the part not ſo much of a Teacher, *as of a* Remembrancer; *And I have attain'd my End, if I have laid before you ſome of the chief* Praiſes, *and* Rewards, *that the* Scriptures *beſtow on theſe two excellent Graces: whereof you, that heard me, are ſo much more able to give Rule, and what is much better, Example to the World.*

My Lord, I am
Your Lordſhip's moſt Humble,
and moſt Obedient Servant,
THO. SPRAT.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

Lord Mayor, &c.

Prov. xxi. 21.

He that followeth after Righteouſneſs, and Mercy, findeth Life, Righteouſneſs and Honour.

IN theſe words there are two moſt Eminent Vertues recommended to us: one the moſt uſeful, the other the moſt aimiable of all that we can acquire towards our being, or well being, in this Life, or the next: Righteouſneſs, the beſt of all Natural Virtues: nay, it is a Chriſtian

an Grace: Mercy, the moſt excellent of all Chriſtian Graces.

Theſe Two are here repreſented to our Earneſt Purſuit, not in the ſevere ſtyle of a ſtrict Command, nor in the Rigid Terms of a Legal Precept. Tho if God had only thus required them of us, they had deſerved our moſt Dutiful Obedience, conſidering the High Prerogative the Almighty Lawgiver has over us. But here they are ſet off to us in the Style of the Goſpel, in the gentle, alluring, and delightful form of a *Promiſe*. That, which is *our neceſſary Duty*, is attended with a *free, ample, immenſe Reward*.

The *Duty* is double, *The following after Righteouſneſs*, *The following after Mercy*. The *Reward* is treble, *Life*, *Righteouſneſs*, *and Honour*: according to the uſual method of God's gracious Dealings with men. *His Promiſes* always go beyond *our Performances*; *His Rewards*, both in weight and number, by far exceed our *Duties*.

Of theſe Studies of *Righteouſneſs and Mercy*, we ſhould all be Followers, as we are Men; we all profeſs our ſelves to be Followers, as we are Chriſtians. What then can be a more proper work for

for us all, in this our ſolemn Meeting, either as *Men*, or as *Chriſtians*, than to reaſon with our ſelves, concerning this whole matter, to convince our Judgments of the Neceſſity of theſe Duties, to Excite our Affections towards them, by the Greatneſs of their Reward?

To this purpoſe, be pleaſed that I examine,

Firſt, What are the two things which are here propoſed to our zealous proſecution?

Secondly, What is the way, the beſt way of following after them?

Thirdly, Let us encourage one another in their attainment, by the largeneſs of the recompence, which is here aſſured to us from the Mouth of Divine Wiſdom it ſelf.

My Text, you ſee conſiſting of a two-fold Duty, and a three-fold Reward, the Duty comes firſt to be conſidered in both its parts; *Righteouſneſs and Mercy*. Both which *Solomon* the wiſe King has here moſt wiſely put together, and in their order. For wherever they both are, Righteouſneſs is the Foundation of Mercy:

Mercy

Mercy is the ornament of Righteouſneſs. And neither of them can be compleat without the other. Whatever is not juſt can never be merciful: Whatever is meerly, ſtrictly juſt, without any compaſſion, it is to a Proverb highly injurious: it is that which the Scripture calls a being *righteous over-much.*

Eccleſ. vii. 16.

The word Righteouſneſs has ſeveral different ſignifications in the Old, and the New Teſtament. In the Old it ſometimes paſſes for all manner of Goodneſs, frequently for the particular Virtue of Juſtice. In the New it commonly ſignifies the ſame; and beſides, it is often raiſed to a higher meaning, to expreſs the glorious Myſtery of our Juſtification by Chriſt, and the ſpiritual Grace which attends it.

I believe, my Text is moſt to be underſtood of that kind of Righteouſneſs, by which is meant, integrity of Actions, and honeſty of Converſation, in all our publick, and private Relations in this World. And ſo I ſhall chiefly handle it. Tho' indeed the other more Divine Interpretation of the Word ought not wholly to be excluded, in our preſent Meditations. For to all I ſhall ſay on this Argument, it muſt be premiſed, that without the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to conſecrate all our

own

own Righteouſneſs, and Mercy, and to make them acceptable to God, it were a vain preſumption for any Man to think he can deſerve by them, upon their own account, either *honor*, or *righteouſneſs*, or *life* it ſelf.

But firſt, I begin with *Righteouſneſs*, as it is taken in the uſual *ſenſe* of the Old Teſtament: For common Juſtice, and moral Honeſty, and obedience to good Laws.

In explaining the nature of this Virtue, it would be no very modeſt undertaking, for me to make a large diſcourſe, before this venerable Aſſembly; where I ſpeak to thoſe, whoſe buſineſs it is, not only to inſtruct, but to regulate, and ſteer the whole Nation in the practice of it. Only for our clearer proceeding, ſomething muſt be ſaid concerning it.

I humbly conceive, a thing, or perſon may be called right, or righteous, or juſt, either by reaſon it is ſo originally, and independently in its own being; or becauſe it is conformable to ſome certain Rule of a Superior Being; by compariſon to whoſe perfection, the moral ſtraightneſs, or crookedneſs of all inferior things ought to be judg'd.

Now nothing can be abſolutely righteous, and primitively juſt, but only God

himſelf; who is the ſole Author of all Truth, and Juſtice, the only Donor of it to us. His infinite underſtanding is the only cauſe, and meaſure of all Truth. His unerring will is the only Fountain, and unalterable Standard of all Righteouſneſs.

As therefore this will of God is diſplay'd in ſeveral manifeſtations to mankind, ſo according to the reſemblance of our wills, and actions to his will thus manifeſted, there may, and ought to be various kinds of righteouſneſs amongſt Men,

As the will of God expreſſes it ſelf to our own hearts in the dictates of rectify'd nature, and right reaſon: So an obſervance of that will is natural, and moral Righteouſneſs. As the will of God is declared in his written Word, ſo a ſubmiſſion to that Will is Religious Righteouſneſs. As the will of God appears in the Images, and Repreſentatives of Gods Power on Earth, ſo an obedience to their Laws is Political, nay, it is Religious Righteouſneſs too: As far as thoſe Laws do not Tranſgreſs the higher Principles of Gods Natural, Moral, or Divine Laws.

This ſeems to be the Nature of Righteouſneſs in general. And this three-fold declaration of Gods will, either written in our own Hearts, or ſpoken in his Word,

Word, or pronounced in the Voice of Lawful Authority, is the moſt certain, if not the only Foundation of that diſtinction between right, and wrong, equity, and injury, by which all Mankind is to be directed in all conditions, either as Superiors, Equals, or Inferiors.

And now that this moſt commendable virtue may not paſs among any of us, as it has with too many in our days, only for an Old Teſtament Duty, rather belonging to a moral Man, than to a Chriſtian: Give me leave to put you in mind, how eſſential it is to Chriſtianity it ſelf; what commendations and priviledges the Holy Scripture aſcribes to it; what high rank and dignity it holds in Gods Statute-Book, as well as in Mens; and that not only in the Law, but in the Goſpel; and not only ſpiritual Righteouſneſs, but natural, and political Righteouſneſs too.

If we ſhall reflect on the whole progreſs, and all the revolutions of Gods diſpenſations to mankind, we may eaſily obſerve, he has always proceeded with us, not only according to the unaccountable purpoſes of his own ſecret will, whoſe Judgments are unſearchable, and its ways paſt finding out: But he has dealt with us, as after the manner of a God, by his

infinite Mercy, ſo, as I may ſay, after the manner of men too, by a ſtanding, plain, declared, written Rule of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs; by Truth of Contract, by Covenant, a double Covenant, in which we might know what is his, what ours by his gift: A Covenant, in which we might underſtand our work, and, if we perform it well, may claim our recompence.

Thus the great Creator of Heaven and Earth, who has an unlimited Dominion and Sovereignty over the works of his hands, is yet ſo much delighted to have mankind govern'd by known Laws, that he himſelf was pleas'd, if I may ſo ſpeak with reverence, to bound, and circumſcribe that part of his own Omnipotence, by the like method.

And in the firſt, moſt publick appearance of Gods preſence to the world, as ſoon as he had choſen to himſelf a peculiar People, when he began to eſtabliſh a ſettled Religion, did not then his care of common Juſtice, and civil Rights keep an equal pace with his proviſion for his own Worſhip? Were his firſt Laws to the *Jews*, Ceremonial, and Ritual only, relating to his own Service alone? Were they not Judicial, and Moral alſo, reſpecting

ſpecting as well the peace and proſperity of Humane Society? Of all which Laws, did not God himſelf ſeem to give the advantage to this latter kind? He did, in this at leaſt, that his own Ceremonial Law, which he then preſcrib'd, was ſometimes to be aboliſh'd, but his Moral Law never.

For upon his ſecond more perfect, and laſt Revelation of Religion in the Goſpel, the way of his own Divine Service was indeed much alter'd, but not any one common Rule of Humane Juſtice: No abrogation of any one precept of Righteouſneſs, or Honeſty followed upon the great reformation from Judaiſm to Chriſtianity, but rather a new addition of more Strength, and Authority to them all.

Whoever ſhall recollect the whole Matter, and Deſign of our Bleſſed Saviour's Preaching, can he poſſibly think otherwiſe? Does not the *whole Sum of his Divine Doctrine*, ſeem well nigh calculated, and fitted as much to eſtabliſh, and direct the *Courts of Legiſlators*, and the *Seats of Juſtice*, as for the *Temple, and the Pulpit*? Were not *all his Sermons*, eſpecially *his great Sermon on the Mount*, a perfect *Comment on the anci-*

ent Precepts of Righteouſneſs and Mercy? Does he not there free them all, one by one, from *Groſs Corruptions*? Does he not vindicate them all by moſt genuine Interpretations? Does he not eſtabliſh them all by ſeverer Puniſhments, and more glorious Rewards? Eſpecially, did he not exemplify them all, by his own moſt innocent, juſt, unblamable, and merciful Life?

Thus confirm'd, thus advanc'd, did our Bleſſed Saviour deliver down the common Rules of Right and Juſtice; and thus the ſame Rules have continued unchangeable in all *Succeſſions of the Chriſtian Church*; never hindring the Great Deſign of Chriſtianity, but exceedingly promoting it, and being themſelves incorporated into it: So that all along the ſame *do, as you would be done to*, the ſame *Definitions of Reaſon and Righteouſneſs*; the ſame *general Precepts of Honeſty in Commerce, and Judicial Proceedings*; the ſame *Laws of Ruling and Obeying*, have been common to *Chriſtians* with *the wiſeſt Heathen Nations*: Or, wherever there was any difference, the *Chriſtian Laws* of this kind were the Stricter, and the Practice of them too amongſt *Chriſtians* for many Ages was, as

their

their Principles require it ever to be, far more exact.

Whatever our New Saints, that are only ſo of their own making, have deviſed, was it ever ſo much as queſtion'd amongſt the Apoſtles, and Primitive Saints, whether the *New Law of the Goſpel*, though that be Styled in Scripture, *The Royal Law of Liberty*; whether that did infranchiſe, and ſet any Man looſe from the Precepts of Internal Virtue and Goodneſs, or of External Submiſſion to Civil Government, and Internal too? A Queſtion indeed there was concerning the *Ceremonial Law*, *Whether that were to be extinguiſh'd*? and that carried in the *Affirmative*. A Queſtion there was alſo concerning *the Moral Law, and Legal Righteouſneſs, Whether that alone could Juſtifie a Chriſtian*? and that determin'd in the Negative. But never did any ſober Chriſtian doubt, *Whether the Moral Law did oblige under the Goſpel or no.*

Certainly, till after a *Thouſand Years*, the *Romiſh Tyranny* prevailed over weak Princes, and blind People; never did any *Church of Chriſt*, or *pretended Head of any*, take to it ſelf a Prerogative to *Exempt the Chriſtian Church from due*

Obedience to the Temporal Power; much leſs to *ſet up a Spiritual Power above the Temporal*, nay, *with a pretended Right to Advance, or Depoſe the Temporal.* Certainly never, till *the Anabaptiſtical Madneſs, and Enthuſiaſtical Phrenſies of theſe laſt Ages*, did any *Members of the Church of Chriſt*, preſume upon an *Extraordinary Purity and Holineſs of their own*, to declare *themſelves Abſolved*, by a *Spiritual Light within them*, from the Eternal Bonds of *Reaſon, Right and Juſtice*, to which we are all Indiſpenſably obliged, not only as we are *Men*, but much more as we are *Chriſtians*.

And to manifeſt the Juſt Judgment of God againſt *them all*, for *theſe Uſurpations*, is it not very obſervable, *That the very ſame Men, who moſt of all Men that call themſelves Chriſtians, have invaded the Rights of Publick Government, and Private Vertue, the Romaniſts on the one Side, the Enthuſiaſts on the other, the very ſame Men have made the Greateſt Invaſions on Religion it ſelf? the one on its Purity, the other on its Unity?*

Thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, Pope *Hildebrand*, and His followers, who aſſum'd a Dominion, and Supremacy over all Temporal Laws, did not they firſt exalt

exalt themſelves in the Temple of God, above all that is called God, above the Scripture it ſelf, the expreſs Law of God? The Anabaptiſts in *Germany*, and their Succeſſors, of whatever Name or Sect, who firſt falſly boaſted, that their inward *Sanctity*, and Inſpirations did ſet them above *the low rudiments, and beggery elements of this World*, As they miſcall'd the Obligations of Virtue, and Obedience: Did the ſame men reſt ſatisfied there? Did they not at the ſame time, profeſs, *That all Sober Piety, and Decent Worſhip, and intelligible Religion, was as Groſs, and Carnal, and Antichriſtian, and as Grievous to their Spirits, as they had pronounced all the Ordinances of Civil Government, and moral Virtue to be?*

But, God be praiſed! neither of theſe *Abominable Examples*, is of *ſufficient Authority*, or *Antiquity*, to make a Preſident, againſt the conſtant, univerſal practice of the whole uncorrupt Chriſtian, as well as Jewiſh Inſtitution. Still therefore the ſame obſervation holds good, that Juſtice and Piety, Righteouſneſs and Religion came into the world together. In their beginning they were brought forth as Twins, the moſt beloved children of the moſt high, the moſt likely Off-ſpring of

of Heaven. And as they were *Contemporaries* at firſt, ſo they have been all along educated together; both cheriſh'd alike by God himſelf, both obſerved alike by all wiſe, holy, and good men.

Nor indeed could it well be otherwiſe. For the mutual agreement between Juſtice, and Piety is inſeparable: The perpetual Union of Righteouſneſs and Religion is moſt neceſſary. The Principles on which they both ſubſiſt, the ends, which they would both produce, are the ſame, or ſubordinate one to the other. Are not true Reaſon, and the Word of God ſome of the chief Principles of true Righteouſneſs? So they are of true Religion. Are not the Glory of God, and the Happineſs of Mankind the Ends of Religion? So they are of Righteouſneſs. Religion indeed, does carry the bleſſed work much farther; undertakes to finiſh it in another Life. But Righteouſneſs begins it in this Life, and performs its part ſo well, that without it, Religion it ſelf could have little, or no real influence on the Conſciences of its Diſciples.

Was not mankind a Society, as ſoon as it was a Church? And Righteouſneſs contributed to make it a Society, as Religion did to make it a Church. Was it not

not Righteouſneſs that firſt made men begin to confide in one another? To commit their private Safety, and Profit to each others Fidelity? That therefore was the common parent of all other Virtues: That firſt peopled the world: That firſt drew, and enticed men into Houſes, and Cities, and then ſecured them there: And ſo divided mankind from beaſts in conditions, as well as habitations. Certainly, it was Righteouſneſs, as a part of natural Religion, that firſt made Men to be Men: And ſo prepared, and then deliver'd them over to reveal'd Religion, and at laſt to be made Chriſtians, and Saints.

If Righteouſneſs had not temper'd, and ſoften'd, and reconciled humane nature within it ſelf: No creature had been more fierce, and ſalvage, than the Sons of *Adam*: None would have had more vehement paſſions to deſire miſchief; none more cunning to contrive it; none greater power to effect it.

If we take Righteouſneſs out of the heart of a man, we leave nothing there of the Image of God, after which he was created. Take Righteouſneſs out of a private Family; and it ſoon turns into a Den of Thieves. Take Righteouſneſs out of a State; and that only, becomes

becomes a more regular, more politick, more combin'd, and therefore a more pernicious Society of mighty Robbers. Take Righteouſneſs out of the World, and the world would not deſerve to be call'd, as it was at firſt, the compleat work of God's hands; but a Chaos ſtill, or a rude Foreſt, or Wilderneſs; or ſomething worſe: For to be inhabited only by rapine, and violence, is worſe, than to be only an innocent, unfrequented Deſart.

Thus whatever increaſe of Civil Arts, whatever flouriſhing of populous Nations, whatever intercourſe between People and People has been practis'd to ſupply the neceſſities, Conveniences, and Ornaments of humane Life: They were all at firſt founded on Righteouſneſs. From that are derived to us, all our temporal Bleſſings: Without that, we could never have enjoyed the means of our Eternal Bleſſings. For where there is no true Righteouſneſs, there can be no true humanity, no civility, no kindneſs of men to one another: And by conſequence, no true Religion. For all true Religion is always accompanied with ſome true humanity: Wherever the Power of Chriſtianity comes, it either finds ſome civili-

ty,

ty, or makes it. What is that which immediately follows, *Glory to God on high, Peace on Earth, good will towards Men.* And where there is no Righteouſneſs, there can be no good will; where there is no good will of Men to one another, there can be no place, or no well-grounded hope of Gods good will to Men.

This is the firſt thing in my Text, *Righteouſneſs*; a virtue ſo beneficial, ſo neceſſary to mankind; ſo highly valued of God himſelf. This deals with Men, as Men, upon the ſquare, upon even terms; juſtly expecting a like return of good Offices. The next is *Mercy*. But that has more of Superiority, and Majeſty in it. That takes Men on the greateſt diſadvantage, with the greateſt generoſity: When they are either miſerable by diſtreſſes, or obnoxious by injuries, relieves the one, pardons the other. Whatever therefore I have ſaid, or can be ſaid in Praiſe of Righteouſneſs; ſtill the chief place in our Praiſes, and Practice, ought to be reſerved for *Mercy*. Great indeed, is the extent of both theſe together. All below Righteouſneſs, is Sin: Nothing is above Mercy. So that both together comprehend the whole compaſs of Mens Duty to one another,

from

from the loweſt to the higheſt part of it; which may be all contained in two words, Honeſty, and Charity; that is, the *Righteouſneſs*, and *Mercy* in my Text.

Thus they are beſt together. But if conſider'd aſunder, or compared, then *Mercy* muſt triumph over, and *rejoice againſt Judgment.* *Righteouſneſs* is a Virtue unblamable: *Mercy* is a Grace moſt Lovely and Honourable. *Righteouſneſs* obliges us to yield to other Men their own: *Mercy* inclines us to give them our own too: and what can be more? *Righteouſneſs* makes you not to be Enemies to others unjuſtly: *Mercy* makes you not to be Enemies to your Enemies: nay, to be their Friends, their Benefactors, even their Gods.

S. James ii. 13.

S. James ii. 13.

Moſt certainly, as *he ſhall have Judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy:* ſo God will requite Mercy with the greateſt Mercy; for *He will requite even Righteouſneſs with Mercy.* Of all the Divine Attributes, God is delighted to exerciſe his Mercy to Men, more than any, nay, than all the reſt: and therefore he cannot but eſteem Mercy in Men above all other Humane Endowments. So Eſſential, ſo Dear is Mercy to God Himſelf, that in his own inexpreſſible Divine

Divine Nature, he ſeems to give it ſome ſpecial Pre-eminence over all his other Perfections: Though, no doubt, they are in themſelves all Equally Divine and Infinite.

For the ſake of his Mercy, God ſeems willing to Change his own Eternal Mind, which is undoubtedly immutable. It is ſaid, *He repented according to the multitude of his Mercies.* When he enjoyns it us, he prefers it before his own Worſhip: He ſays, *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice.* His Mercy may be ſaid to ſweeten his Holineſs, to moderate his Power, to delay, to ſtop his Revenge, to enlarge, beyond all proportion, his diſtributive, and, after all Provocations, to reſtrain his Vindicative Juſtice. His Mercy God often employs, without any the leaſt mixture of his ſevere Attributes: But he ſeldom, or never Exerciſes any of them in this world, ſo as utterly, irreparably to exclude his mercy: *In the midſt of judgments, he remembers mercy.*

Pſal cv 45.

S. Mat. ix. 13.

The *Two Great Attributes*, by which God condeſcends to govern all Humane Affairs, are his Power, or his Mercy. But an Almighty Power alone had been rather Dreadful, than Auſpicious

to

to Mankind. It might have fill'd mens minds with Fear, and Terror, and have frighted them into a Servile Compliance. 'Tis only Mercy added to Power, that brings Authority with it, and charms Mens Hearts into a Willing Obedience.

Which of theſe Two God Himſelf prefers, can we have a clearer Inſtance, than in *the Perſons and Adminiſtrations* of *Moſes*, and our Bleſſed Saviour? *Moſes* the *Vice-gerent of God's Power*, our Saviour of his *Mercy*: *Moſes* the *Servant of God*, our Saviour the *Son of God*, nay, *God himſelf*.

During the *Miniſtry of Moſes*, we read much of *Countries laid waſte*, of *Nations plagued*, of *the Firſt-born cut off*; of *Kingdoms and Armies over-whelm'd and deſtroy'd*. Then *Religion* ſeem'd rather inclin'd to *terrifie the World*, than to *pardon it*; to *inforce a Law*, than to *perſwade it*; to *ſubdue Enemies*, than to *make Friends*. But at *the Appearance of our Bleſſed Saviour*, *Religion* ſeem'd on a ſudden *reconciled to the whole World*, and not only to *require by its Divinity*, but to *deſerve by its Clemency the Love and Reverence of all Mankind*. For in our *Saviour's Works*, though there were

Undeniable

Undeniable Teſtimonies of his Unlimited Power, yet there were more of *his boundleſs Mercy*; Though both in him were Infinite, yet his Mercy was moſt Apparent.

Such is Mercy, ſo *Wonderful, Adorable, and Univerſal*, in the *Firſt Great Example*, and *moſt perfect Original of it*, God himſelf! 'Tis well for us that it is ſo. And ſuch in truth of Imitation, ſhould be the imperfect Copies, that we take of it from him. Tho we cannot come near that Mercy in any meaſure of equality: Yet we ſhould all ſtrive to reſemble it, if we would partake of it: *To be merciful as our Heavenly Father is merciful.* As he is merciful! Yes. As his *Mercy is over all his own works*, and above all our ſins: So ſhould our mercy be, in our weak degree of proportion; above all our own good works to other Men, above all other Mens ill works, and offences againſt us. This is the only way, for us frail, and ſinful Creatures, to be like our Heavenly Father, in that very thing, in which he is moſt our Father moſt our Heavenly Father. S. Luke vi. 36. Pſ. cxiv. 9.

Theſe then are the two great Duties here recommended, both the principal things in Heaven and Earth. Nothing

brings Heaven down ſo near to Earth: Nothing raiſes Earth ſo much toward Heaven. What then can be done better on Earth? What more worthy of Heaven, than to follow after them both? And what is it *to follow after them*, in a right manner, in a true Scripture ſenſe? Which is my ſecond Head propoſed.

ὁδὸς δικαιοσύνης, καὶ ἐλεημοσύνης εὑρήσει, &c.

We read it, according to the Hebrew, *He that followeth after Righteouſneſs, and Mercy.* The Septuagint render it, *The way of Righteouſneſs and Mercy, ſhall find,* &c. Indeed, whoever would rightly purſue theſe, or any other Graces, they muſt do it, in a way; not by ſecret ſhifts, and turning; not in by-path, or indirectly; not after any private fancy, or ſpirit; but by a trodden, direct, lawful Rule: Let me ſay it, in the Kings High-way. Thus every Man ought to be righteous to all men, equally, and indifferently, not only to his own Friends, or Sect, or Party. We may, 'tis true, be merciful to ſome Men more than to others, according to our opportunities, or obligations, or diſcretion: But then ſtill we ſhould be exceedingly careful, that we be not unmerciful to any Man.

Thus to *follow after* theſe things is to ſet about their performance, ſpeedily, zea-

zealouſly, indefatigably, with the whole Man, in all our thoughts, words, and actions; eſpecially the Men of this world, as Chriſtian Men of this world, plainly, and ſincerely to ſet your Minds, your Tongues, your Hands, your Feet, to the work: With the cleareſt Conviction of your Underſtandings, that they ought to be practis'd, but chiefly with the moſt ardent, and unwearied Affections of your Hearts, in the practice: For it is the heart, it is practice, that God moſt regards.

And *to follow after* both theſe Graces aright, is to practiſe them both in their ſeaſons, and proportions: Never to divide two ſuch things, which God himſelf has ſo nearly joyn'd in his Commands; in his own incomprehenſible Godhead has indiſſolubly united them: So we to conjoyn, and mingle them both together; never to omit either of them, on a pretence, that it is for the ſake of the other; but with the moſt charitable, and harmonious mixture of both in one, to ſeaſon, to ſtrengthen, to juſtifie all our Mercy with Righteouſneſs; to qualifie, to allay, to ſweeten all our Righteouſneſs with Mercy.

And thus really *to follow after* both theſe things, in Scripture-Language, is, really to obtain them. So gracious, and benign are the Expreſſions of the Holy Ghoſt in theſe matters, that your unfeigned labour, and well-directed induſtry in the ways of grace, and goodneſs, brings with it an infallible ſucceſs: Your very endeavours after them, if uncounterfeit, and perſevering, are often here taken for the effect it ſelf. So gently, ſo compaſſionately does our good, and only wiſe God condeſcend to meet our infirmities, that his Grace does often prevent our diligence; never fails it, never comes ſhort of it.

S. Mat. vii. 7. Let us but *knock, and the Gate of Divine Mercy ſhall be open'd to us*; *Let us but ſeek, and we ſhall find: Let us but ask, and we ſhall have: Let us but follow after, and we ſhall overtake.* Nay, farther yet, God will not only give us the very things, we ask, and ſeek, and follow after: But he often ſuper-adds the recompence of them at the ſame time: Oftentimes accompanies, and ſets off his Graces, not only with their own peculiar gifts, and advantages; but accumulates more, heaps upon them many other remote bleſſings.

Of

Of which moſt bounteous method of Gods diſpenſations to mankind, *Solomon*, the wiſe Author of this ſentence in my Text, of all Men living in his time, had the greateſt experience. For when God entirely left it to his will, which he would chooſe, either Wiſdom, or Wealth, or Power, or Victory; and he had made the beſt choice in preferring Wiſdom: God did not only plentifully beſtow that upon him, but over and above caſt in all the other good things, which in compariſon to Wiſdom, he himſelf had rejected. God ſaid to him, *Becauſe thou haſt asked for thy ſelf this thing, and haſt not ask'd for thy ſelf long Life, neither haſt ask'd riches for thy ſelf, nor haſt ask'd the Life of thine Enemies, but haſt ask'd for thy ſelf underſtanding to diſcern Judgment; behold, I have done according to thy words: Lo! I have given thee a wiſe, and an underſtanding heart: So that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee ſhall any ariſe like unto thee. And I have alſo*, ſays God, *given thee that which thou haſt not ask'd, both riches and honour. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, and keep my Statutes, and my Commandments, then I will alſo lengthen thy days.* 1 Kings iii.

So that *Solomon*, of all men, was the fitteſt Man to continue his own obſervation of Gods infinite goodneſs in this kind, upon Sacred Record to all Generations. And therefore as God had proved to him, concerning Wiſdom, and Underſtanding, ſo he pronounces here of *Righteouſneſs and Mercy*, without which the higheſt underſtanding is Craft, not Prudence; the greateſt ſeeming Wiſdom is Subtilty, and Artifice, not Wiſdom.

Of *Righceouſneſs and Mercy*, he affirms, in my Text, not only that he, who follows after them ſhall find *Righteouſneſs and Mercy* themſelves: Tho that were much; much more than any other ſtudy can boaſt of, that all our ſearch ſhall never be in vain: But here that is ſuppoſed, as out of all queſtion: Much more is ſaid: Not only that he who follows after *Righteouſneſs and Mercy* ſhall find, but findeth, what? Not only *Righteouſneſs*, *and Mercy*, but moreover *Life*, *Righteouſneſs and Honour*. You ſhall not only poſſeſs theſe Virtues, if you ſincerely purſue them, but you ſhall enjoy, ſo ſurely, that you may be ſaid already to enjoy, the happy Fruits of that purſuit, which are *Life*, *Righteouſneſs*, *and Honour*.

That

That is my Third, and Laſt Particular,

The Rewards, enſuing the Right following after theſe Duties; which, you ſee, are far more than equal to the Duties themſelves. But what if theſe Vertues had come ſingle, and alone, without any ſuch bleſſed Train of Promiſes, or bright attendance of Rewards? how ought we to have been affected towards them even then?

Out of all Controverſie, we ought ſtill to have followed after them moſt earneſtly, to have embraced them moſt willingly, for their own ſakes, for their own true worth, and unvaluable beauty. Nor need we to fetch Arguments from the Chriſtian Principles, to perſwade us to this. Thus much even the wiſe, and good Men amongſt the *Gentiles* have taught us. They ſcarce thought any Philoſophy worthy of a man that did not oblige him to love *Juſtice and Bounty*, and all other Virtues, for themſelves, for their inward benefit, and inviſible Excellence.

And if *the very Heathens* could have ſuch Juſt Apprehenſions of Things, under their obſcure, and imperfect Light, what ſhame would it be to us *Chriſtians*, if we ſhould not far exceed them?

what Reproach, if we ſhould ſcarce equal them? what hainous Scandal, if we would come ſhort of them, in our Opinions, and Practice of theſe Things? If we ſhould think Virtue of it ſelf to be leſs praiſe worthy than they did, or leſs its own reward?

Yet ſince our moſt gracious Maſter, our moſt indulgent Father, has thought fit to add ſo much to theſe ſelf-ſufficient Duties; we may thankfully accept of thoſe Promiſes: we may lawfully look to that recompence of Reward, that Recompence, which we could not deſerve. And we ought therefore to double our induſtry, which is ſo doubly, ſo manifoldly requited; moſt diligently to follow after *Righteouſneſs and Mercy*: ſince they are things in themſelves ſo deſirable, ſo advantageous, ſo ineſtimable in their Rewards.

First, *Of Life, and Honour.*

As I ſaid before of the word *Righteouſneſs*, ſo I muſt now ſay of the words *Life, and Honour*: They have different meanings in the Old, and New Teſtament. Under the Law, *Life*, and *Honour*, and moſt other legal Promiſes; were,

were, I do not ſay only, but commonly underſtood in a litteral ſenſe; for *Temporal Proſperity, and Secular Happineſs.*

But the Goſpel, as it has rais'd the Things themſelves much higher, ſo it proportionably advanc'd the Words. And therefore in the Goſpel, though Temporal Felicity be not at all obſtructed, but rather exceedingly promoted by it, yet *Life*, and *Honour*, and moſt other Evangelical Promiſes, are moſt frequently to be taken in a more Sublime, and Divine Senſe; for Life Immortal, Honours Unſpeakable, Joys full of Glory.

I cannot now in Juſtice, but apply this Promiſe to my preſent Subject, in its full Extent, in both its Senſes: For moſt ſurely *Righteouſneſs and Mercy* are able to entitle you all to both theſe *Lives*, to both theſe *Honours*, both here, and hereafter.

The firſt kind of *Life, and Honour*, which is *Peace of Days, Increaſe of Dignity, and Reputation in this World*; All thoſe Bleſſings theſe Virtues may claim, as their Due and Right; as their own by Purchaſe, and Deſert, though not from God, yet from all Mankind. And

in

in Fact, they are ſeldom diſpoſſeſt of them, but by great Injury, or extraordinary Misfortune; or, to ſpeak in the Chriſtian Language, by ſome hidden purpoſe of Divine Providence.

Nor is this only the Prerogative of *Righteouſneſs and Mercy*. But, though this may at firſt ſeem a Paradox, yet it is a Priviledge common to all other Virtues, that as they have great, and juſt expectations of a future Recompence, ſo they are uſually accompanied with ſome very conſiderable temporal good, and advantage. And it is the unavoidable, inſupportable miſery of all Vice, that as its proſpect into another World is moſt diſmal, ſo its condition in this is ever ſome way, or other very uncomfortable.

Whatever flattering and deceitful ſhapes ſin may put on, yet it can never ſo diſſemble all its defects, ſo hide all its deformities, but ſtill when we come to our ſelves, when the Charm is over, we may ſee, and muſt confeſs, that all wickedneſs is followed cloſe by ſome very great, notorious, temporal puniſhment, and diſadvantage. Some bring loſs of Credit, Contempt, Infamy, Hatred: as Diſhoneſty, Cruelty, Corrup-

Corruption, Oppreſſion, inordinate Ambition: which very commonly fails of that vain Honour, it unduly graſps at, and loſes that quiet life, of which before it was calmly poſſeſt. Some bring loſs of Health, decay of Bodily Strength, and Pleaſure, which they only ſeem to conſult. As Luxury, and Riot, bring Sickneſs and Diſeaſes: they make Men moſt unfit for Death, and yet moſt haſten it, Some bring loſs of Earthly Riches, as Prodigallity, and Intemperance; which Poverty purſues as an armed Man: ſo that Men often loſe their hopes of another World, not ſo much as for the good things of this World, but even by throwing away their ſhare in this World too. Nay, Coveteouſneſs does the ſame: by a greedineſs of getting more, it deprives it ſelf of the true ends of getting; it loſes the uſe, and enjoyment of what it had got,

Thus every Vice has its dark ſhadow, ſome evil genius haunting it in this World: its ſatisfactions are ſhort, and uncertain; its Calamities moſt certain, moſt durable. Whilſt on the other ſide, every Virtue has its good Angel, is ſurrounded with ſome viſible luſtre, ſome

ſome Worldly advantage. Some bring Health, ſome Wealth, ſome Power, ſome Fame, ſome Contentment; a good at leaſt equal to any of the other. But *Righteouſneſs and Mercy* united bring them all together. You ſee they freely offer to your poſſeſſion, they will plentifully ſhower into your boſoms all the ſweetneſs, and tranquillity of Life, all the ſplendor, and abundance of a Life that is honourable.

All this they are here enabled to do by the gift of a Divine Promiſe: This in truth for the moſt part, they cannot but do, by natural effect, and conſequence. For towards a ſecure, and happy Life, Righteouſneſs does very much: Mercy perfects what the other leaves undone. Righteouſneſs makes few or no Foes, none worth making Friends: Mercy makes, or deſerves to make all Friends; even of Foes. Righteouſneſs always commends you to good Men, and often defends you againſt wicked Men; never juſtly provokes wicked Men againſt you: Mercy moves, melts, reconciles, conquers even the wicked; by the moſt powerful kind of Victory overcomes evil with good.

Rom. xii. 21.

What

What then, in all humane probability, may be reaſonably expected from ſuch inoffenſive Juſtice, ſuch charming, ſuch diffuſive Benignity, and Compaſſion? what? but the Juſtice, nay more, the thanks, the good will, and good offices of thoſe, who ſhall be righted by your Juſtice? what? but the Prayers, the Hearts, the Lives, if need be, of thoſe who ſhall be preſerv'd by your mercy, or forgiven by your pity? All this from withour: Beſides the comfortable aſſurance, and teſtimony of a clear and ſerene conſcience within; which only is able to make Life ſweet, honour not a burden: nay, it is able to make undeſerv'd diſgrace a comfort, and death it ſelf happy.

And certainly all this is life, and honour; this is Praiſe and Glory; if there be any true life, above a ſenſual, carnal life: if there be any ſubſtantial, laſting honor, above the periſhing ſhadows of it: if there be not only any Religion towards God, but if there be any thing true, and juſt, and honeſt, and lovely, and of good report; if there be any virtue, any praiſe amongſt men: if that be Glory, which the very Heathens have defined to be the concurring

ring eſteem, and commendation of the wiſe, and the good, beſtow'd on great Men, not only, nor indeed chiefly, for their riches, or power; but rather for their Clemency and Beneficence: perfections moſt proper to the upper part of mankind. And they can never do miſchief to the lower part, nay they can never be employed, but in doing good to the lower part of the world. God himſelf has ſaid, that *Great men are Gods*: Yet it is not greatneſs alone, but mercy joyn'd with greatneſs, and ſtrengthen'd with Righteouſneſs, that can make them ſo.

Yet becauſe it may ſo happen, by the ſecret diſpoſal of the all-wiſe Governour of all things, that *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy* may ſometimes fail of a Temporal Reward: Becauſe that may come to paſs, which yet *David* profeſſes never to have ſeen from his youth to his old Age, *That the righteous Man may be forſaken, and his Seed beg their Bread*, or want an eaſie ſubſiſtence of life: Nay, becauſe the merciful Man may come ſhort of his juſt recompence of honour here below: Therefore there is ſtill behind a ſufficient reſerve, an unmeaſurable compenſation, in the other more Heavenly ſenſe of the

Pſalm. xxxvii. 25.

words

words *Life*, and *Honour*: Which, as ſure as God is true, will be, are the undoubted Portion of the righteous, and merciful Man.

That Life, that Honour, *which Eye has not ſeen, nor Ear heard*, nor hath it enter'd into the Tongue of Man to expreſs, or Heart to conceive, that is the moſt worthy Subject of all our Thoughts, that ought to be the chief end of all our deſigns. Elſe our deſigns may be ſpecioufly honourable; they may be for life in a low ſenſe, rather indeed for livelihood than life; only to ſupport a life, that is but for a moment ſupportable: But they can never elſe promote our true life; they can never elſe be truly profitable, much leſs truly honourable.

Our Gracious God indeed permits, nay, he encourages you all, in the Proſecution of the *Life*, and *Honours* of this World. His Laws have very many precepts of true humility, but no levelling principles in them, no more than yours have. Diſtinctions of Dignity, different advantages of Life, degrees of honour do very well agree with the greateſt purity, ſtrictneſs, and ſimplicity of the Goſpel: No doubt therefore they muſt be conſiſtent

ſtent with the freeneſs, and largeneſs, and generoſity of Chriſtianity.

God ſuffers mankind to be provok'd, and excited to Virtue, by all manner of arguments, by ſecular, as well as by ſpiritual promiſes; by temporal, as well as by Eternal hopes. He allows you all the ſober purſuit of the moderate delights, and plenty of this Life: They are his gift, if you obtain them. He is, no doubt, well pleas'd with your earneſt endeavours after excellency, in any kind of wiſe counſel, or uſeful knowledge, or worthy Action. The honours you reap thereby, he confers upon you: Of the good you do thereby, you your ſelves have the principal advantage.

Give me leave therefore to add; All theſe our other deſigns ſhould ſo be proportion'd, that being good in themſelves, they be not made ill by their abuſe, or exceſs: All our thoughts of this worlds *Life*, and *Honours* ſhould be ſo order'd, as neither to depreſs our minds too much, by the cares of this *Life*, nor to raiſe them too high, by the *honours* of this world: Rather they ſhould be employ'd, to aſſiſt our Souls, and give them wings, in riſing higher to ſupernatural expectations; to a *Life*, to *Ho-*

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nour immortal; to carry up our contemplations, to fix our affections on Heaven, on that Proſpect above, which is the laſt bound of the very Eyes of our Bodies; how much more ought it to be the laſt object of the Eyes of our Minds!

And if that *Life*, that *Honour* ſhall be at the bottom of all your hearts, ſhall be the beginning, and end of all your pains, and ſtudies, if by *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy* you ſhall aſpire towards them, you cannot come ſhort of them. This way you ſhall find as near, and as ſure a paſſage to Heaven, from the midſt of your Earthly buſineſs, and worldly Employments, conſcientiouſly, and piouſly, righteouſly, and mercifully managed, as any other Man has reaſon to expect from the greateſt retirement of a ſolitary Devotion.

I ſpeak this on good Authority. For thus the Holy Scripture it ſelf diſpenſes the Joys of Heaven. In the whole courſe of the Goſpel, Eternal Glory is as much, at leaſt as much, enſured to the juſt, and charitable virtues, and graces of an Active Life, and of a publick Station in this world, as to any other part of all contemplative, or practical Religion.

Whatever imaginations ſome Men may have concerning the true way, and gate, that leads to Celeſtial Happineſs: Which Men have been always too ready to open to themſelves, and to thoſe of their own Parties, and Opinions; too quick in ſhutting it upon all others: Too many uſurping an Authority of Brandiſhing the Terrors of Gods Juſtice, and of ſcattering the aſſurances of his Mercy, when, and where they pleaſe; which were neither of them ever committed to their diſtribution: Yet whatever claim ſuch Men may make to the Joys of Heaven: Some pretending to them only by the free Grace, without regarding the Precepts of the Goſpel: Some only by relying on ſingle Faith, and vilifying of Charity: Some by great ſcruples in little things, and far leſs care of great things: Some by cenſuring of other Mens Lives, and putting as many as they can, under a State of Damnation; by being more againſt other Mens Religions, than for their own: Yet undoubtedly none of theſe is the way. Theſe are all miſtaken, unrighteous, unmerciful ways. The only true way to Heaven, which God himſelf has traced out, which Chriſt himſelf

himſelf does often point at, tho it be narrow, yet it is a direct, not a croſs way: Though it be ſtrait, yet it is paſſable, and has a gate always open. And what is this way? What this Gate? It is not a diſputing, contentious, comparing, cenſorious, but a mild, peaceable, righteous, merciful way. And this it is, By the mercy of God the Father, *Chriſt made to us Righteouſneſs*: And that Mercy and this Righteouſneſs made effectual to us men by the aſſiſtance, and Conſolations of God the Holy Ghoſt; and that received, by men with a lively, efficacious Faith; and that evidenc'd to be in men by ſuch effects, as moſt reſemble their Divine Original, ſuch as reſpect both God, and Man: Which are true *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy* of men to one another, accompanied with unfeigned Piety towards God.

Is there ſtill behind in my Text any more reward promiſed to the Man, who follows after *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy*? Indeed, can there be any more, than mortal life, and honour? Life, and honour immortal? Yes, there is ſtill more. And it is that, you ſee, which is the cauſe of all the other Rewards. It is Righteouſneſs it ſelf. *He that follo-*

loweth after Righteouſneſs, and Mercy, findeth life, righteouſneſs, and honour: Which now, if you pleaſe, may be thus briefly paraphraſed. He that lives righteouſly, and mercifully towards men, if he ſhall practiſe theſe Virtues humbly, and conſtantly; if he ſhall perform them ſo, as not at all to rely on their merit for ſalvation; if ſtill he ſhall find the want, and believe the efficacy, and lay hold on the benefit of our dear Redeemers more precious Righteouſneſs: He ſhall then partake of the Fruits, and enjoy the happineſs, that is promiſed indeed to our *righteouſneſs, and mercy*, but was purchas'd only by our Saviours Righteouſneſs, and beſtow'd only by Gods mercy.

I am now arrived at the other more Evangelical ſignification of the word *Righteouſneſs*. But I come to it ſo late, that I cannot treat of it at large. And it is better to ſay nothing of it than too little. Only from this, and the reſt of my diſcourſe, I beg leave to preſent you farther with one ſhort obſervation; which perhaps will not be unſeaſonable, by me to be mention'd with all Submiſſion, by you to be received with favourable Interpretation.

You

You may perceive, that the true Doctrine, and Practice of *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy*, of Mens *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy* to one another; of Gods *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy* to Men, had the ſame Divine Author, and Example at firſt, the ſame courſe, and progreſs afterwards: And they are all along in Scripture repreſented under the ſame, or very like Expreſſions. *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy* are the ſum of the Law in one ſenſe; they are the ſubſtance of the Goſpel in another. The only poſſible means and inſtrument, to ſecure, and preſerve the one of theſe, is Civil Government: The only way to teach, and maintain the other is Religion.

What now may be fairly concluded from all this? Certainly, that as theſe two moſt admirable things have themſelves ſo long, ſo well agreed in matter, and words, in growth, and increaſe; as they are both the beſt things in this world; ſo the means, and inſtruments of preſerving them both, are both moſt nearly united in intereſt, and ought to be ſo in mutual affections, and aſſiſtance.

Certainly, when God himſelf choſe his firſt Law-giver, and his firſt High-

Prieſt, out of the ſame Family; when he appointed *Moſes* and *Aaron* two Brethren of the ſame houſe, to be his principal Miniſters of Juſtice, and Piety: It was not by chance, it was not for want of choice. But there was even then ſome myſtical intention, and that was even then a happy preſage, that between the true Righteouſneſs, and the true Religion, there ſhould, in all ſucceeding Ages be nouriſh'd a perpetual League, and Alliance, offenſive and defenſive: That, as God himſelf expreſſes it, *Aaron might be to* Moſes *inſtead of a Mouth*; Moſes *to* Aaron *inſtead of God.*

And is there not ſtill the ſame reaſon, for the ſame entire Union between both theſe things among us, as there was then among Gods own People? Have they not both the ſame ſtrengths, and dangers, the ſame hopes, and fears, the ſame Friends, and Enemies, the ſame Friends in Heaven, and Earth, the ſame Enemies in Earth and Hell?

The common adverſaries of both may begin againſt Religion, as, God knows, in moſt of our memories, they did. But did not then, and will not always, the ruine of Righteouſneſs ſuddenly follow

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the overthrow of Religion? In all, or moſt of the ſeditious practices, tumults, and confuſions among us, the falſe cauſe of God has been firſt pretended, the true cauſe of God firſt ſtruck at: And next to that immediately a falſe Juſtice has been made a colour to ſupplant the true Juſtice: The Church has been always attempted firſt to be removed, that they might come at the State the more eaſily.

Can there be then a more powerful argument to unite us all in preventing the like miſchiefs, than our common danger? Can there be a better guide to admoniſh us all how to prevent them, than our common experience?

I profeſs I ſpeak this, not only as a neceſſary caution for the time to come, but as well in juſt acknowledgement of what is paſt. For as we have reaſon to thank the Enemies of our Religion, on all ſides, when they upbraid us, as they often do, that ours is a meer State-Religion, becauſe the intereſt of our Church has been always, ever ſince its Reformation, inſeparable from that of the Civil Government: Which we freely grant, and muſt always aſſert, as that by which we ſhall ſtand, or fall; nay,

by which, through the Bleſſing of God, we ſhall always ſtand: So we muſt declare to all the world, that next to the Scripture it ſelf, and the genuine Interpretation of it by the Ancient Chriſtian Writers, and the uninterrupted uſe of the beſt, and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity; next theſe, the great Eſtabliſhment, and Strength of the Church of *England*, is the Protection of the Crown, and the Stability of our Civil Government, and Laws. And thus far we confeſs, ours is a State-Religion: Our Church was Reform'd by Authority of the State: And above all its Enemies, it beſt provides for the ſecurity of the State.

Wherefore, in the Name of God, as the beſt way to fruſtrate all our Enemies hopes againſt our Church and State; which will be the moſt ſolid anſwer to all their little Objections, let us all unanimouſly perſevere, in our ſeveral Stations, to Pray for, and obey, to ſtrengthen and defend one of the moſt moderate, the wiſeſt, the moſt Pious frames of Religion, that ever Chriſtians enjoy'd ſince the Primitive Age; one of the beſt, the freeſt, the moſt happy conſtitutions of Civil Government, that ever mankind enjoy'd ſince the Creation. May we all

agree

agree in this undeniable truth, that whoever would ſubvert the State, they are mortal Enemies to Religion: Whoever would deſtroy Religion, they are equally Enemies to the State. To both let us *be Subject, not only for wrath, but for Conſcience ſake*, becauſe ſo very little, or no wrath, ſo much of Juſtice, and Mercy is to be found in them both. Rom. xiii.

May therefore *Juſtice, and Piety, Mercy, and Truth meet together, that Glory may dwell in our Land: May Righteouſneſs, and Peace always kiſs each other among us.* May the Counſels, and Perſons, that advance, and protect both in this Nation, be inviolably united in *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy*: May they for ever Proſper with *Life*, and *Honour*. *AMEN.*

FINIS.

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